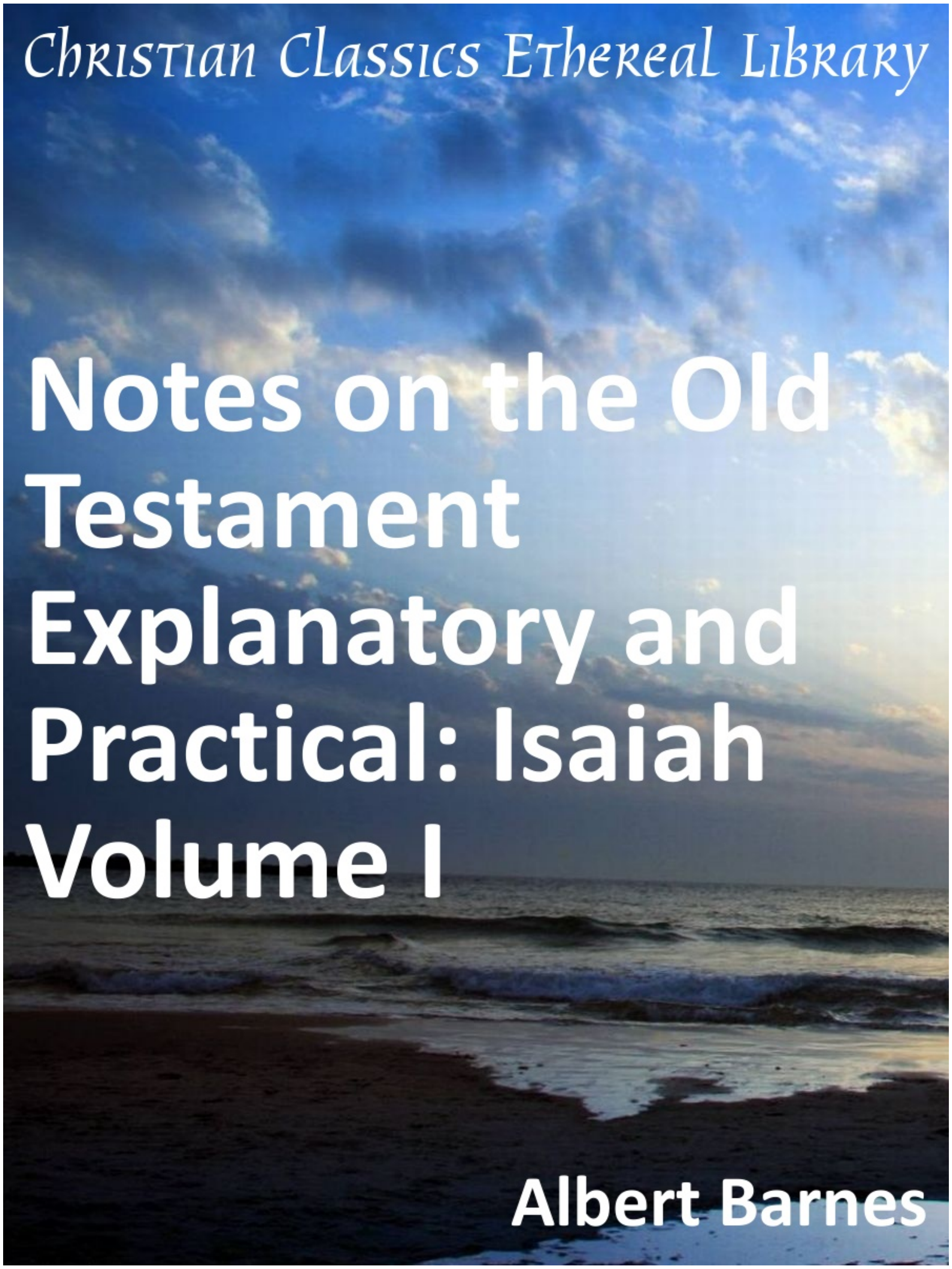

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Notes on the Old Testament Explanatory and Practical: Isaiah Volume I

Albert Barnes

Notes on the Old Testament Explanatory and Practical: Isaiah Volume I

Author(s): Barnes, Albert (1798-1870)

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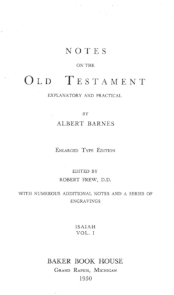

NOTES
ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT
EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL

BY
ALBERT BARNES

Enlarged Type Edition

EDITED BY
ROBERT FREW, D.D.

WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL NOTES AND A SERIES OF ENGRAVINGS

ISAIAH
VOL. I

BAKER BOOK HOUSE
Grand Rapids, Michigan
1950

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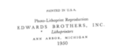

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1950

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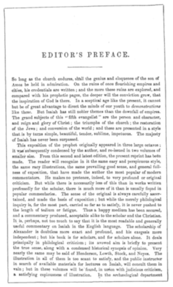
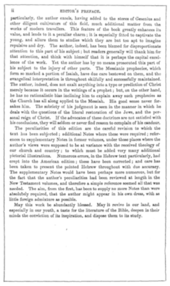


EDITOR'S PREFACE.

So long as the church endures, shall the genius and eloquence of the son of Amos be held in admiration. On the ruins of once flourishing empires and cities, his credentials are written; and the more these ruins are explored, and compared with his prophetic pages, the deeper will the conviction grow, that the inspiration of God is there. In a sceptical age like the present, it cannot but be of great advantage to direct the minds of our youth to *demonstrations* like these. But Isaiah has still nobler themes than the downfall of empires. The grand subjects of this "fifth evangelist" are the person and character, and reign and glory of Christ; the triumphs of the church; the restoration of the Jews; and conversion of the world; and these are presented in a style that is by turns simple, beautiful, tender, sublime, impetuous. The majesty of Isaiah has never been surpassed.

This exposition of the prophet originally appeared in three large octavos; it was subsequently condensed by the author, and re-issued in two volumes of smaller size. From this second and latest edition, the present reprint has been made. The reader will recognize in it the same easy and perspicuous style, the same racy illustrations, the same prevailing good sense, and general fullness of exposition, that have made the author the most popular of modern commentators. He makes no pretence, indeed, to very profound or original criticism. But while there is necessarily less of this than in works written professedly for the scholar, there is much more of it than is usually found in popular commentaries. The sense of the original is always carefully ascertained, and made the basis of exposition; but while the merely philological inquiry is, for the most part, carried so far as to satisfy, it is never pushed to the length of tedium or fatigue. Thus a happy medium has been secured, and a commentary produced, acceptable alike to the scholar and the Christian. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that it is the most readable and generally useful commentary on Isaiah in the English language. The scholarship of Alexander is doubtless more exact and profound, and his exegesis more independent; but his book is for scholars, and for scholars alone. It deals principally in philological criticism; its avowed aim is briefly to present the true sense, along with a condensed historical synopsis of opinion. Very nearly the same may be said of Henderson, Lowth, Stock, and Noyes. The illustration in all of them is too scant to satisfy, and the public instructor in search of available materials for lectures on Isaiah, will consult them in vain; but in these volumes will be found, in union with judicious criticism, a satisfying copiousness of illustration. In the archæological department iv



particularly, the author excels, having added to the stores of Gesenius and other diligent cultivators of this field, much additional matter from the works of modern travellers. This feature of the book greatly enhances its value, and lends to it a peculiar charm; it is especially fitted to captivate the young, and allure them to studies which they are but too apt to imagine repulsive and dry. The author, indeed, has been blamed for disproportionate attention to this part of his subject; but readers generally will thank him for that attention, and think with himself that it is perhaps the capital excellence of the work. Yet the author has by no means prosecuted this part of his subject to the injury of other parts. The Messianic prophecies, which form so marked a portion of Isaiah, have due care bestowed on them, and the evangelical interpretation is throughout skilfully and successfully maintained. The author, indeed, does not exalt anything into a type or prediction of Christ merely because it occurs in the writings of a prophet; but, on the other hand, he has no rationalistic bias inclining him to explain away such prophecies as the Church has all along applied to the Messiah. His good sense never forsakes him. The sobriety of his judgment is seen in the manner in which he deals with the questions of the literal restoration of the Jews, and the personal reign of Christ. If the advocates of these doctrines are not satisfied with his conclusions, they will seldom or never find reason to complain of his candour.

The peculiarities of this edition are the careful revision to which the text has been subjected; additional Notes where these were required; references to supplementary Notes in former volumes, under those places where the author's views were supposed to be at variance with the received theology of our church and country; to which must be added very many additional pictorial illustrations. Numerous errors, in the Hebrew text particularly, had crept into the American edition; these have been corrected; and care has been taken to present the pointed Hebrew throughout with due accuracy. The supplementary Notes would have been perhaps more numerous, but for the fact that the author's peculiarities had been reviewed at length in the New Testament volumes, and therefore a simple reference seemed all that was needed. The aim, from the first, has been to supply no more Notes than were absolutely required, that the author might appear in his own dress, with as little foreign admixture as possible.

May this work be abundantly blessed. May it revive in our land, and especially in our youth, a taste for the literature of the Bible, deepen in their minds the conviction of its inspiration, and dispose them to its study.

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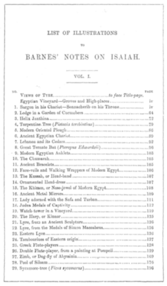

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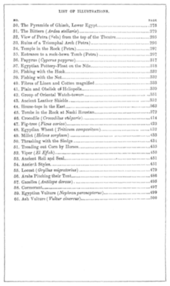

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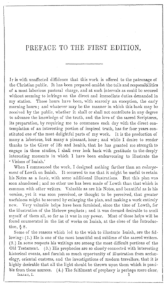


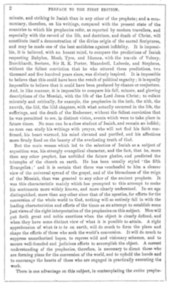
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is with unaffected diffidence that this work is offered to the patronage of the Christian public. It has been prepared amidst the toils and responsibilities of a most laborious pastoral charge, and at such intervals as could be secured without seeming to infringe on the direct and immediate duties demanded in my station. These hours have been, with scarcely an exception, the early morning hours; and whatever may be the manner in which this book may be received by the public, whether it shall or shall not contribute in any degree to advance the knowledge of the truth, and the love of the sacred Scriptures, its preparation, by requiring me to commence each day with the direct contemplation of an interesting portion of inspired truth, has for four years constituted one of the most delightful parts of my work. It is the production of many a laborious, but many a pleasant, hour; and while I desire to render thanks to the Giver of life and health, that he has granted me strength to engage in these studies, I shall ever look back with gratitude to the deeply interesting moments in which I have been endeavouring to illustrate the 'Visions of Isaiah.'

When I commenced the work, I designed nothing farther than an *enlargement* of Lowth on Isaiah. It occurred to me that it might be useful to retain his Notes as a *basis*, with some additional illustrations. But this plan was soon abandoned; and no other use has been made of Lowth than that which is common with other writers. Valuable as are his Notes, and beautiful as is his version, yet it was soon perceived, or thought to be perceived, that greater usefulness might be secured by enlarging the plan, and making a work entirely new. Very valuable helps have been furnished, since the time of Lowth, for the illustration of the Hebrew prophets; and it was deemed desirable to avail myself of them all, so far as it was in my power. Most of these helps will be found enumerated in the list of works on Isaiah, at the close of the Introduction, § 8.

Some of the reasons which led to the wish to illustrate Isaiah, are the following: (1.) He is one of the most beautiful and sublime of the sacred writers. (2.) In some respects his writings are among the most difficult portions of the Old Testament. (3.) His prophecies are so closely connected with interesting historical events, and furnish so much opportunity of illustration from archæology, oriental customs, and the investigations of modern travellers, that it is highly desirable that all the light should be thrown upon them which is possible from these sources. (4.) The fulfilment of prophecy is perhaps more clear,

Isaiah, I. 1

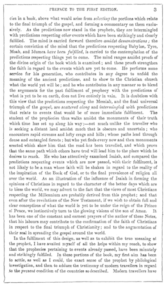


2 PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

minute, and striking in Isaiah than in any other of the prophets; and a commentary, therefore, on his writings, compared with the present state of the countries to which his prophecies refer, as reported by modern travellers, and especially with the record of the life, and doctrines, and death of Christ, will constitute itself a demonstration of the divine origin of the sacred Scriptures, and may be made one of the best antidotes against infidelity. It is impossible, it is believed, with an honest mind, to compare the predictions of Isaiah respecting Babylon, Moab, Tyre, and Idumea, with the travels of Volney, Burckhardt, Seetzen, Sir R. K. Porter, Maundrell, Laborde, and Stephens, without the fullest conviction that he who uttered these predictions, two thousand and five hundred years since, was divinely inspired. It is impossible to believe that this could have been the result of political sagacity; it is equally impossible to believe that it could have been produced by chance or conjecture. And, in like manner, it is impossible to compare his full, minute, and glowing descriptions of the Messiah, with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; to collate minutely and critically, for example, the prophecies in the ixth, the xith, the xxxvth, the liid, the liiid chapters, with what actually occurred in the life, the sufferings, and the death of the Redeemer, without the fullest conviction that he was permitted to see, in distinct vision, events which were to take place in future times. No man can be a close student of Isaiah, and remain an infidel; no man can study his writings with prayer, who will not find his faith confirmed, his heart warmed, his mind elevated and purified, and his affections more firmly fixed on the beauty of the everlasting truth of God.

But the main reason which led to the selection of Isaiah as a subject of exposition was, his strongly evangelical character, and the fact, that he, more than any other prophet, has unfolded the *future* glories, and predicted the triumphs of the church on earth. He has been usually styled 'the fifth Evangelist;' and it is certain that there was vouchsafed to him a clearer view of the universal spread of the gospel, and of the blessedness of the reign of the Messiah, than was granted to any other of the ancient prophets. It was this characteristic mainly which has prompted to this attempt to make his sentiments more widely known, and more clearly understood. In an age distinguished, more than any other since that of the apostles, for efforts for the conversion of the whole world to God, nothing will so entirely fall in with the leading characteristics and efforts of the times as an attempt to establish some just views of the right interpretation of the prophecies on this subject. Men will put forth great and noble exertions when the object is clearly defined, and when they have some distinct view of what it is possible to attain. A right apprehension of what *is to be* on earth, will do much to form the plans and shape the efforts of those who seek the world's conversion. It will do much to suppress unauthorized hopes, to repress wild and visionary schemes, and to secure well-founded and judicious efforts to accomplish the object. A correct understanding of the prophecies, therefore, is necessary to direct those who are forming plans for the conversion of the world, and to uphold the hands and to encourage the hearts of those who are engaged in practically executing the work.

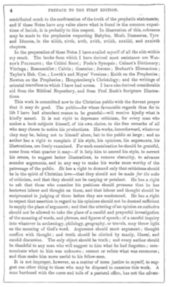
There is one advantage on this subject, in contemplating the *entire* prophe-



PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION. 3

cies in a book, above what would arise from *selecting* the portions which relate to the final triumph of the gospel, and forming a commentary on them exclusively. As the predictions now stand in the prophets, they are intermingled with predictions respecting *other* events which have been strikingly and clearly fulfilled. The mind is carried forward therefore *amidst demonstrations;* the certain conviction of the mind that the predictions respecting Babylon, Tyre, Moab, and Idumea *have been fulfilled*, is carried to the contemplation of the predictions respecting things yet to come. The mind ranges amidst proofs of the divine origin of the book which is examined; and these proofs strengthen the faith in regard to the events which are yet to come. He performs some service for his generation, who contributes in any degree to unfold the meaning of the ancient predictions, and to show to the Christian church what the world yet will be; and he who contributes in any manner so to blend the arguments for the past fulfilment of prophecy with the predictions of what is yet to be on earth, does not live entirely in vain. It is doubtless with this view that the predictions respecting the Messiah, and the final universal triumph of the gospel, are *scattered along* and *intermingled* with predictions that relate to events that would be of more immediate fulfilment. The student of the prophecies thus walks amidst the monuments of their truth which time has set up along his way;—not much unlike the traveller who is seeking a distant land amidst much that is obscure and uncertain; who encounters rapid streams and lofty crags and hills; whose paths lead through dense and entangled forests; but who yet finds every now and then monuments erected which show him that the road *has* been travelled, and which prove that the same path which others have trod will lead him to the place which he desires to reach. He who has attentively examined Isaiah, and compared the predictions respecting events which are now passed, with their fulfilment, is not likely to be a man whose faith will be shaken in regard to the reality of the inspiration of the Book of God, or to the final prevalence of religion all over the world. As an illustration of the influence of Isaiah in forming the opinions of Christians in regard to the character of the better days which are to bless the world, we may advert to the fact that the views of most Christians respecting the Millennium are probably derived from this prophet; and that even after the revelations of the New Testament, if we wish to obtain full and clear conceptions of what the world is yet to be under the reign of the Prince of Peace, we instinctively turn to the glowing visions of the son of Amoz. It has been one of the constant and earnest prayers of the author of these Notes, that his labours may contribute to the confirmation of the faith of Christians in respect to the final triumph of Christianity; and to the augmentation of their zeal in spreading the gospel around the world.

In the fulfilment of this design, as well as to exhibit the true meaning of the prophet, I have availed myself of all the helps within my reach, to show that the prophecies pertaining to events already passed, have been minutely and strikingly fulfilled. In these portions of the book, my first aim has been to settle, as well as I could, the exact sense of the prophet by philological investigation, and then to adduce the testimony of modern travellers in regard to the *present* condition of the countries so described. Modern travellers have

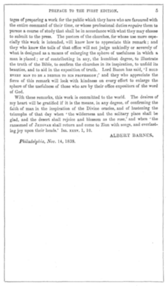


contributed much to the confirmation of the truth of the prophetic statements; and if these Notes have *any* value above what is found in the common expositions of Isaiah, it is probably in this respect. In illustration of this, reference may be made to the prophecies respecting Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Tyre and Idumea, in the xiiith, xivth, xvth, xvith, xviith, xxxiiid, and xxxivth chapters.

In the preparation of these Notes I have availed myself of all the aids within my reach. The books from which I have derived most assistance are WALTON'S POLYGLOTT; the Critici Sacri; Poole's Synopsis; Calmet's Dictionary; Vitringa; Rosenmüller; Calvin; Gesenius; Jerome; Bochart's Hierozoicon; Taylor's Heb. Con.; Lowth's and Noyes' Versions; Keith on the Prophecies; Newton on the Prophecies; Hengstenberg's Christology; and the writings of oriental travellers to which I have had access. I have also derived considerable aid from the Biblical Repository, and from Prof. Bush's Scripture Illustrations.

This work is committed now to the Christian public with the fervent prayer that it may do good. The public—for whose favourable regards thus far in life I have had abundant reason to be grateful—will receive kindly what is kindly meant. It is not *right* to deprecate criticism, for every man who makes a book subjects himself, of his own choice, to the *free* remarks of all who may choose to notice his productions. His works, henceforward, whatever they may be, belong not to himself alone, but to the public at large; and no author has a right to complain if his style, his opinions, his arguments, his illustrations, are freely examined. For such examination he should be grateful, come from what quarter it may—if it help him to amend his style, to correct his errors, to suggest better illustrations, to remove obscurity, to advance sounder arguments, and in any way to make his works more worthy of the patronage of the public. *He* has a right to demand only that criticisms should be in the spirit of Christian love—that they should not be made *for the sake* of criticism, and that they should not be carping or petulant. He has a right to ask that those who examine his positions should *presume* that he has bestowed labour and thought on them, and that labour and thought should be reciprocated in judging of them before they are condemned. He has a right to expect that assertion in regard to his opinions should not be deemed sufficient to supply the place of argument; and that the uttering of an opinion *ex cathedra* should not be allowed to take the place of a candid and prayerful investigation of the meaning of words, and phrases, and figures of speech; of a careful inquiry into whatever in archæology, philology, geography, or travels, may throw light on the meaning of God's word. Argument should meet argument; thought conflict with thought; and truth should be elicited by manly, liberal, and candid discussion. The only object should be truth; and every author should be thankful to any man who will suggest to him what he had forgotten; communicate what to him was unknown; correct or refute what was erroneous; and thus make him more useful to his fellow-men.

It is not improper, however, as a matter of mere justice to myself, to suggest one other thing to those who may be disposed to examine this work. A man burdened with the cares and toils of a pastoral office, has not the advan-



tages of preparing a work for the public which they have who are favoured with the entire command of their time, or whose professional duties *require* them to pursue a course of study that shall be in accordance with what they may choose to submit to the press. The pastors of the churches, for whose use more especially this work is intended, will know how to appreciate this remark; and they who know the toils of that office will not judge unkindly or severely of what is designed as a means of enlarging the sphere of usefulness in which a man is placed; or of contributing in any, the humblest degree, to illustrate the truth of the Bible, to confirm the churches in its inspiration, to unfold its beauties, and to aid in the exposition of truth. Lord Bacon has said, 'I HOLD EVERY MAN TO BE A DEBTOR TO HIS PROFESSION;' and they who appreciate the force of this remark will look with kindness on every effort to enlarge the sphere of the usefulness of those who are by their office expositors of the word of God.

With these remarks, this work is committed to the world. The desires of my heart will be gratified if it is the means, in any degree, of confirming the faith of man in the inspiration of the Divine oracles, and of hastening the triumphs of that day when 'the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose,' and when 'the ransomed of JEHOVAH shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.' Isa. xxxv. 1, 10.

ALBERT BARNES.

Philadelphia, Nov. 14, 1838.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Since the publication of the first edition of this work, I have twice carefully revised it. In doing this, while the main features of the exposition have been retained, I have endeavoured to render it more worthy of the patronage of the Christian public. I have availed myself of all the criticisms made on it which I have seen, and have adopted all the suggestions which appeared to me to be well founded. My principal aim has been to *condense* the work as much as possible, by removing redundant words, and by excluding whatever did not contribute to the elucidation of the Prophet. The work was originally published in three large octavo volumes. By using a different type; by the omission of the 'New Translation' inserted in the former edition, and by the abridgments which have been made, I am now able to present it in a much narrower compass, and at a price which will make it much more easy to procure it. It may perhaps be of interest to some to know that in revising it, I have stricken out matter, besides the 'New Translation,' to the amount of about one hundred and twenty octavo pages, and have introduced new matter to the amount of about fifty pages. In a few places additions of considerable extent have been made. For the new matter I am under special obligations to the Biblical Researches of Dr. Robinson, and Mr. Smith, and to the work of Wilkinson on the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians. By the aid of the 'Researches' I have been enabled to correct several places relating to the geography of Palestine, and to throw important light on several passages of the Prophet. I have, in fact, incorporated in the Notes all that I have found in that invaluable work which seemed to me to illustrate in any way the writings of Isaiah, and as nothing better can be hoped for on the Holy Land, this part of the work may be considered to be complete. The favourable manner in which the first edition was received made it obligatory on me to do all that I could to make it more worthy of patronage, and again I commit it to the world, with the hope that it may contribute in some degree to the illustration of this sublime and beautiful portion of the inspired volume.

ALBERT BARNES.

Washington Square, Philadelphia, June 23, 1845.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *Division of the Books of the Old Testament.*

THE *Jews* early divided the books of the Old Testament into three parts—the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Hagiographa*, or holy writings. The *Law* comprised the five books of Moses; and the priority was given to this division because it was the first composed, as well as on account of its containing their civil and ecclesiastical constitution, and their oldest historical records. The *Prophets* comprised the second and the largest division of the sacred writings of the Jews. This portion comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, which were called the *former prophets;* and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the books from Hosea to Malachi, which were called the *latter prophets.* Daniel has been excluded from this portion by the later Jews, and assigned to the third division, because they regard him not as a prophet, but as an historical writer. Formerly his work was doubtless included in the second division. The third portion, *the Hagiographa*, comprises the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. This division of the Old Testament is as old as the time of our Saviour, for he refers to it in Luke xxiv. 44. The Jews attribute the arrangement and division of the canonical books to Ezra. They say that he was assisted in this by one hundred and twenty men who constituted 'a great Synagogue;' that Daniel, and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were of this number; and that Haggai and Zechariah, together with Simon the Just, also were connected with it. But this statement is known to be erroneous. From the time of Daniel to the time of Simon the Just, not less than two hundred and fifty years intervened (Alexander on the Canon, pp. 26, 27); and of course all these persons could not have been present. It is not, however, improbable that Ezra may have been assisted by learned and pious men who aided him in the work. What Ezra *did* is indeed unknown. It is the general opinion that he collected and arranged the books which now compose the Old Testament; that perhaps he wrote some of the historical books, or compiled them from fragments of history and documents that might have been in the public archives (comp. the ANALYSIS of Isa. ch. xxxvi.); and that he gave a finish and arrangement to the whole. As Ezra was an inspired man, the arrangement of the sacred books, and the portions which he may have added, have thus the sanction of Divine authority. There is no evidence, however, that Ezra *completed* the canon of

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the Old Testament. Malachi lived after him, and in the first book of Chronicles (ch. iii.) the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is carried down to the time of Alexander the Great—about one hundred and thirty years subsequent to the time of Ezra. The probability is, therefore, that Ezra *commenced* the arrangement of the books, and that the canon of the Old Testament was completed by some other hand.

The 'prophets' were divided into *the former* and *the latter.* Among the latter, Isaiah has uniformly held the first place and rank. This has been assigned him not because he prophesied before all the others. He indeed preceded Ezekiel and Jeremiah, but Jonah, Amos, and Hosea were his contemporaries. The precedence has been given to his prophecies over theirs, probably for two reasons; first, on account of their length, dignity, and comparative value; and secondly, because formerly the minor prophets were bound in one volume, or written on one roll of parchment, and it was convenient to place them *together*, and they all had a place, therefore, after Isaiah. At all times his prophecies have been regarded as the most important of any in the Old Testament; and by common consent they have been deemed worthy of the principal place among the Jewish writings.

§ 2. *Life of Isaiah, and the Characteristics of his Writings.*

Of the time in which Isaiah lived, little more is known than he has himself told us. In the superscription to his book (ch. i. 1), we are told that he was the son of Amoz, and that he discharged the prophetic office under the reign of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In regard to those times, and the character of the period in which they reigned, see Introduction, § 3. It is evident also from the prophecies themselves, that he delivered them during the reign of these kings. In ch. vi. 1, it is expressly said that he had a vision of JEHOVAH in the year in which Uzziah died. Of course he must have commenced his prophetic labours at least as early as during the last year of that king. If that chapter or vision was not designed as an inauguration of the prophet, or an induction into the prophetic office (see Notes on the chapter), and if his prophecies were collected and arranged as they were delivered, then it will follow that the previous chapters (i.–v.) may have been delivered in the reign of Uzziah, and perhaps some time before his death. There is no express mention made of his uttering any prophecies in the time of Jotham. Hengstenberg and others suppose that the prophecies in ch. ii.–v. were delivered during his reign. But of this there is no conclusive evidence. He might not have *recorded* anything during his reign; though he may, as a public preacher, have been engaged in the prophetic office in another mode. His writings themselves contain evidence that he was engaged in the prophetic office in the reign of Ahaz. See ch. vii., seq. That he was engaged in the prophetic office during the reign of Hezekiah we learn from chs. xxxvi.–xxxix. We have an explicit statement that he was occupied in his prophetic work until the fifteenth year of Hezekiah, at the commencement of which the ambassadors from Babylon came up to Jerusalem to congratulate him on his recovery from his illness; ch. xxxix. Uzziah died, according to Calmet, 754 years before Christ. Isaiah

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must therefore have occupied the prophetic office at least from 754 years before Christ to 707 years before Christ, or forty-seven years; that is, under Uzziah one year, under Jotham sixteen years, under Ahaz sixteen years, and under Hezekiah fourteen years. It is not known at what age he entered on the prophetic office. It is probable that he lived much longer than to the fifteenth year of Hezekiah. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 32, it is said that 'the rest of the acts of Hezekiah' were 'written in the vision of Isaiah;' and this statement obviously implies that he survived him, and wrote the acts of his reign up to his death. As Hezekiah lived fourteen or fifteen years after this (Isa. xxxviii. 5, comp. 2 Kings xviii. 2), this would make the period of his public ministry to extend to at least sixty-one or sixty-two years. If he survived Hezekiah, he probably lived some time during the reign of Manasseh. This supposition is confirmed, not indeed by any direct historical record in the Old Testament, but by all the traditional accounts which have been handed down to us. The testimony of the Jews, and of the early fathers, is uniform that he was put to death by Manasseh by being sawn asunder. The main alleged offence was, that he had said that he had seen JEHOVAH, and that for this he ought to die, in accordance with the law of Moses (Ex. xxxiii. 20), 'No man shall see me and live.' If he lived to the time of Manasseh, and especially if he prophesied under him, it is probable the true reason why he was put to death was, that he was offensive to the monarch and his court.

The circumstances which render the supposition probable that he lived under Manasseh, and that he was put to death by him by being sawn asunder, are the following. (1.) The fact which has been stated above that he lived to complete the record of the reign of Hezekiah, and of course survived him. (2.) The testimony of the Jewish writers. There is, indeed, much that is fabulous in their writings, and even in connection with the truths which they record, there is much that is puerile and false; but there is no reason to doubt the main *facts* which they relate. Josephus, indeed, does not expressly state that he was slain by Manasseh, but he gives an account of the reign of Manasseh which renders it probable that *if* Isaiah were then alive he would have been put to death. Thus he says (Ant. B. x. ch. iii. § 1) that 'he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflown with blood.' In the Talmud the following record occurs:—'Manasseh put Isaiah to death. The Rabbi said, he condemned him, and put him to death; for he said to him, Moses, thy Lord said, No man shall see me and live (Ex. xxxiii. 20), but thou hast said, I saw the Lord upon a throne high and lifted up (Isa. vi. 1). Moses, thy Lord said, Who will make the Lord so near that we can call to him; but thou hast said, Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near (lv. 6). Moses, thy Lord said, The number of thy days will I fulfil (Ex. xxiii. 26); but thou hast said, I will add to thy days fifteen years (xxxviii. 5),' etc. See Gesenius Einlei. p. 12. The testimony of the Jews on this subject is uniform. Michaelis (Preface to Isaiah) has referred to the following places in proof on this point. Tract. Talmud. *Jabhamoth*, fol. 49; *Sanhedrin*, fol. 103; *Jalkut*, part ii. fol. 38; *Schalscheleth Hakkab.* fol. 19. Raschi and Abarbanel in their commentaries give the same statement. (3.)

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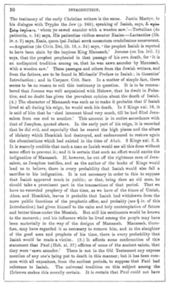

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The testimony of the early Christian writers is the same. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew (p. 349), speaking of Isaiah, says, ὃν πρίονι ξυλίνῳ ἐπρίσατε, 'whom ye sawed asunder with a wooden saw.'—Tertullian (de patientia, c. 14) says, His patientiae viribus secatur Esaias.—Lactantius (lib. iv. c. 2) says, Esais, quem ipsi Judaei serrâ consectum crudelissime necaverunt.—Augustine (de Civit. Dei, lib. 18, c. 24) says, 'the prophet Isaiah is reputed to have been slain by the impious King Manasseh.' Jerome (on Isa. lvii. 1) says, that the prophet prophesied in that passage of his own death, for 'it is an undisputed tradition among us, that he was sawn asunder by Manasseh, with a wooden saw.' These passages and others from the Jewish writers, and from the fathers, are to be found in Michaelis' Preface to Isaiah; in Gesenius' Introduction; and in Carpzov. Crit. Sacr. In a matter of simple fact, there seems to be no reason to call this testimony in question. It is to be remembered that Jerome was well acquainted with Hebrew, that he dwelt in Palestine, and no doubt has given the prevalent opinion about the death of Isaiah. (4.) The character of Manasseh was such as to make it probable that if Isaiah lived at all during his reign, he would seek his death. In 2 Kings xxi. 16, it is said of him that he 'shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.' This account is in entire accordance with that of Josephus, quoted above. In the early part of his reign, it is recorded that he did evil, and especially that he reared the high places and the altars of idolatry which Hezekiah had destroyed, and endeavoured to restore again the abominations which had existed in the time of Ahab. 2 Kings xxi. 2, 3. It is scarcely credible that such a man as Isaiah would see all this done without some effort to prevent it; and it is certain that such an effort would excite the indignation of Manasseh. If, however, he cut off the righteous men of Jerusalem, as Josephus testifies, and as the author of the books of Kings would lead us to believe, there is every probability that Isaiah would also fall a sacrifice to his indignation. It is not necessary in order to this to suppose that Isaiah appeared much in public; or that, being then an old man, he should take a prominent part in the transactions of that period. That we have no *recorded* prophecy of that time, as we have of the times of Uzziah, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, leaves it probable that Isaiah had withdrawn from the more public functions of the prophetic office, and probably (see § iv. of this Introduction) had given himself to the calm and holy contemplation of future and better times under the Messiah. But still his sentiments would be known to the monarch; and his influence while he lived among the people may have been materially in the way of the designs of Manasseh. Manasseh, therefore, may have regarded it as necessary to remove him, and in the slaughter of the good men and prophets of his time, there is every probability that Isaiah would be made a victim. (5.) It affords some confirmation of this statement that Paul (Heb. xi. 37) affirms of some of the ancient saints, that they were 'sawn asunder.' There is not in the Old Testament any express mention of any one's being put to death in this manner; but it has been common with all expositors, from the earliest periods, to suppose that Paul had reference to Isaiah. The universal tradition on this subject among the Hebrews makes this morally certain. It is certain that Paul could not have

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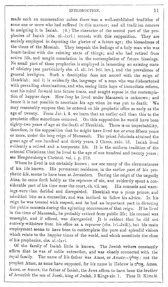

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made such an enumeration unless there was a well-established tradition of some one or more who had suffered in this manner; and all tradition concurs in assigning it to Isaiah. (6.) The character of the second part of the prophecies of Isaiah (chs. xl.–lxvi.) accords with this supposition. They are mainly employed in depicting the glories of a future age; the blessedness of the times of the Messiah. They bespeak the feelings of a holy man who was heart-broken with the existing state of things; and who had retired from active life, and sought consolation in the contemplation of future blessings. No small part of those prophecies is employed in lamenting an existing state of *idolatry* (see particularly chs. xl. xli. lvi. lvii. lxv.), and the prevalence of general irreligion. Such a description does not accord with the reign of Hezekiah; and it is evidently the language of a man who was disheartened with prevailing abominations, and who, seeing little hope of immediate reform, cast his mind forward into future times, and sought repose in the contemplation of happier days. How *long* he lived under Manasseh is unknown; and hence it is not possible to ascertain his age when he was put to death. We may reasonably suppose that he entered on his prophetic office as early as the age of twenty. From Jer. i. 6, we learn that an earlier call than this to the prophetic office sometimes occurred. On this supposition he would have been eighty-two years of age at the death of Hezekiah. There is no improbability, therefore, in the supposition that he might have lived ten or even fifteen years or more, under the long reign of Manasseh. The priest Jehoiada attained the great age of one hundred and thirty years, 2 Chron. xxiv. 15. Isaiah lived evidently a retired and a temperate life. It is the uniform tradition of the oriental Christians that he lived to the age of one hundred and twenty years; see Hengstenberg's Christol. vol. i. p. 278.

Where he lived is not certainly known; nor are many of the circumstances of his life known. His permanent residence, in the earlier part of his prophetic life, seems to have been at Jerusalem. During the reign of the ungodly Ahaz, he came forth boldly as the reprover of sin, and evidently spent a considerable part of his time near the court, ch. vii. seq. His counsels and warnings were then derided and disregarded. Hezekiah was a pious prince, and admitted him as a counsellor, and was inclined to follow his advice. In his reign he was treated with respect, and he had an important part in directing the public counsels during the agitating occurrences of that reign. *If* he lived in the time of Manasseh, he probably retired from public life; his counsel was unsought, and if offered, was disregarded. It is evident that he did not *entirely* withdraw from his office as a reprover (chs. lvi.–lviii), but his main employment seems to have been to contemplate the pure and splendid visions which relate to the happier times of the world, and which constitute the close of his prophecies, chs. xl.–lxvi.

Of the family of Isaiah little is known. The Jewish writers constantly affirm that he was of noble extraction, and was closely connected with the royal family. The name of his father was Amos, or *Amots*—אָמוֹץ; not the prophet Amos, as some have supposed, for *his* name in Hebrew is עָמוֹס. Amos, or Amotz, the father of Isaiah, the Jews affirm to have been the brother of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, 2 Kings xiv. 1. Thus D. Kimchi

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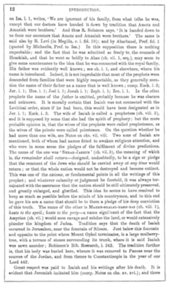

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on Isa. i. 1, writes, 'We are ignorant of his family, from what tribe he was, except that our doctors have handed it down by tradition that Amotz and Amaziah were brothers.' And thus R. Solomon says, 'It is handed down to us from our ancestors that Amotz and Amaziah were brothers.' The same is said also by R. Levi (in Megilla, c. i. fol. 10); and by Abarbanel, Pref. fol. 1 (quoted by Michaelis, Pref. to Isa.) In this supposition there is nothing improbable; and the fact that he was admitted so freely to the counsels of Hezekiah, and that he went so boldly to Ahaz (ch. vii. 1, seq.), may seem to give some countenance to the idea that he was connected with the royal family. His father was evidently well known; see ch. i. 1, and elsewhere, where his name is introduced. Indeed, it is not improbable that most of the prophets were descended from families that were highly respectable, as they generally mention the name of their father as a name that is well known; comp. Ezek. i. 3; Jer. i. 1; Hos. i. 1; Joel i. 1; Jonah i. 1; Zeph. i. 1; Zec. i. 1. In the other prophets the name of the *father* is omitted, probably because he was obscure and unknown. It is morally certain that Isaiah was not connected with the Levitical order, since if he had been, this would have been designated as in Jer. i. 1; Ezek. i. 3. The wife of Isaiah is called a prophetess (ch. viii. 3), and it is supposed by some that she had the spirit of prophecy; but the more probable opinion is, that the wives of the prophets were called prophetesses, as the wives of the priests were called priestesses. On the question whether he had more than one wife, see Notes on chs. vii. viii. Two sons of Isaiah are mentioned, both of whom had names fitted to awaken religious attention, and who were in some sense the pledges of the fulfilment of divine predictions. The name of the one was 'SHEAR-JASHUB' (ch. vii. 3), the meaning of which is, *the remainder shall return*—designed, undoubtedly, to be a sign or pledge that the remnant of the Jews who should be carried away *at any time* would return; or that the whole nation would not be destroyed and become extinct. This was one of the *axioms*, or fundamental points in all the writings of this prophet; and whatever calamity or judgment he foretold, it was always terminated with the assurance that the nation should be still ultimately preserved, and greatly enlarged, and glorified. This idea he seems to have resolved to keep as much as possible before the minds of his countrymen, and to this end he gave his son a name that should be to them a pledge of his deep conviction of this truth. The name of the other is MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ (ch. viii. 1), *haste to the spoil; haste to the prey*—a name significant of the fact that the Assyrian (ch. vii.) would soon ravage and subdue the land, or would extensively plunder the kingdom of Judea. Tradition says that the death of Isaiah occurred in Jerusalem, near the fountain of Siloam. Just below this fountain and opposite to the point where Mount Ophel terminates, is a large mulberry-tree, with a terrace of stones surrounding its trunk, where it is said Isaiah was sawn asunder; Robinson's Bib. Research, i. 342. The tradition further is, that his body was buried here, whence it was removed to *Paneas* near the sources of the Jordan, and from thence to Constantinople in the year of our Lord 442.

Great respect was paid to Isaiah and his writings after his death. It is evident that Jeremiah imitated him (comp. Notes on chs. xv. xvi.); and there

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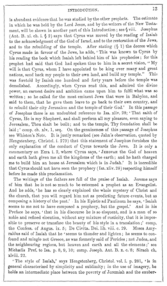

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is abundant evidence that he was studied by the other prophets. The estimate in which he was held by the Lord Jesus, and by the writers of the New Testament, will be shown in another part of this Introduction; see § viii. Josephus (Ant. B. xi. ch. i. § 2) says that Cyrus was moved by the reading of Isaiah to the acknowledgment of the God of Israel, and to the restoration of the Jews, and to the rebuilding of the temple. After stating (§ 1) the decree which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews, he adds, 'This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet had said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision, "My will is that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition came upon him to fulfil what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem and the temple of their God.' In this passage of Josephus there is an undoubted reference to Isa. xliv. 28; 'That saith of Cyrus, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid;' comp. ch. xlv. 1, seq. On the genuineness of this passage of Josephus see Whiston's Note. It is justly remarked (see Jahn's observation, quoted by Hengstenberg, Christol. i. 279) that this statement of Josephus furnishes the only explanation of the conduct of Cyrus towards the Jews. It is only a commentary on Ezra i. 2, where Cyrus says, 'JEHOVAH the God of heaven and earth hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.' It is incredible that Cyrus should not have seen the prophecy (Isa. xliv. 28) respecting himself before he made this proclamation.

The writings of the fathers are full of the praise of Isaiah. Jerome says of him that he is not so much to be esteemed a prophet as an Evangelist. And he adds, 'he has so clearly explained the whole mystery of Christ and the church, that you will regard him not as predicting future events, but as composing a history of the past.' In his Epistle ad Paulinum he says, 'Isaiah seems to me not to have composed a prophecy, but the gospel.' And in his Preface he says, 'that in his discourse he is so eloquent, and is a man of so noble and refined elocution, without any mixture of rusticity, that it is impossible to preserve or transfuse the beauty of his style in a translation;' comp. the Confess. of Augus. ix. 5; De Civita. Dei. lib. viii. c. 29. Moses Amyraldus said of Isaiah that he 'seems to thunder and lighten; he seems to confound and mingle not Greece, as was formerly said of Pericles; not Judea, and the neighbouring regions, but heaven and earth and all the elements;' see Michaelis Pref. to Isa. p. 8, 9, 10; comp. Joseph. Ant. B. x. c. 8; Sirach ch. xlviii. 22.

'The style of Isaiah,' says Hengstenberg, Christol. vol. i. p. 281, 'is in general characterised by simplicity and sublimity; in the use of imagery, he holds an intermediate place between the poverty of Jeremiah and the exuber-

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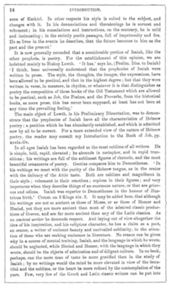

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ance of Ezekiel. In other respects his style is suited to the subject, and changes with it. In his denunciations and threatenings he is earnest and vehement; in his consolations and instructions, on the contrary, he is mild and insinuating; in the strictly poetic passages, full of impetuosity and fire. He so lives in the events he describes, that the future becomes to him as the past and the present.'

It is now generally conceded that a considerable portion of Isaiah, like the other prophets, is poetry. For the establishment of this opinion, we are indebted mainly to Bishop Lowth. 'It has,' says he, (Prelim. Diss. to Isaiah) 'I think, been universally understood that the prophecies of Isaiah were written in prose. The style, the thoughts, the images, the expressions, have been allowed to be poetical, and that in the highest degree; but that they were written in verse, in measure, in rhythm, or whatever it is that distinguishes as poetry the composition of those books of the Old Testament which are allowed to be poetical, such as Job, the Psalms, and the Proverbs, from the historical books, as mere prose, this has never been supposed, at least has not been at any time the prevailing feeling.'

The main object of Lowth, in his Preliminary Dissertation, was to demonstrate that the prophecies of Isaiah have all the characteristics of Hebrew poetry; a position which he has abundantly established, and which is admitted now by all to be correct. For a more extended view of the nature of Hebrew poetry, the reader may consult my Introduction to the Book of Job, pp. xxxix–liv.

In all ages Isaiah has been regarded as the most sublime of all writers. He is simple, bold, rapid, elevated; he abounds in metaphor, and in rapid transitions; his writings are full of the sublimest figures of rhetoric, and the most beautiful ornaments of poetry. Grotius compares him to Demosthenes. 'In his writings we meet with the purity of the Hebrew tongue, as in the orator with the delicacy of the Attic taste. Both are sublime and magnificent in their style; vehement in their emotions; copious in their figures; and very impetuous when they describe things of an enormous nature, or that are grievous and odious. Isaiah was superior to Demosthenes in the honour of illustrious birth.' Comm. on 2 Kings xix. 2. It may be added here, that although his writings are not so ancient as those of Moses, or as those of Homer and Hesiod, yet they are more ancient than most of the admired classic productions of Greece, and are far more ancient than any of the Latin classics. As an *ancient writer* he demands respect. And laying out of view altogether the idea of his inspiration, and his *religious* character, he has a claim as a poet, an orator, a writer of eminent beauty and unrivalled sublimity, to the attention of those who are seeking eminence in literature. No reason can be given why in a course of mental training, Isaiah, and the language in which he wrote, should be neglected, while Hesiod and Homer, with the language in which they wrote, should be the objects of admiration and of diligent culture. In no book, perhaps, can the mere man of taste be more gratified than in the study of Isaiah; by no writings would the mind be more elevated in view of the beautiful and the sublime, or the heart be more refined by the contemplation of the pure. Few, very few of the Greek and Latin classic writers can be put into

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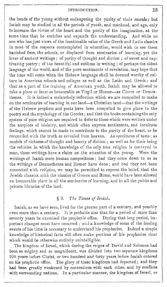

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the hands of the young without endangering the purity of their morals; but Isaiah may be studied in all the periods of youth, and manhood, and age, only to increase the virtue of the heart and the purity of the imagination, at the same time that he enriches and expands the understanding. And while no one who has just views of the inestimable value of the Greek and Latin classics in most of the respects contemplated in education, would wish to see them banished from the schools, or displaced from seminaries of learning, yet the lover of ancient writings; of purity of thought and diction; of sweet and captivating poetry; of the beautiful and sublime in writing; of perhaps the oldest language of the world, and of the pure sentiments of revelation, may hope that the time will come when the Hebrew language shall be deemed worthy of culture in American schools and colleges as well as the Latin and Greek; and that as a part of the training of American youth, Isaiah may be allowed to take a place *at least* as honourable as Virgil or Homer—as Cicero or Demosthenes. It is indeed a melancholy reflection which we are compelled to make on the seminaries of learning in our land—a Christian land—that the writings of the Hebrew prophets and poets have been compelled to give place to the poetry and the mythology of the Greeks; and that the books containing the only system of pure religion are required to defer to those which were written under the auspices of idolatry, and which often express sentiments, and inculcate feelings, which cannot be made to contribute to the purity of the heart, or be reconciled with the truth as revealed from heaven. As specimens of taste; as models of richness of thought and beauty of diction; as well as for their being the vehicles in which the knowledge of the only true religion is conveyed to man, these writings have a claim on the attention of the young. Were the writings of Isaiah mere human compositions; had they come down to us as the writings of Demosthenes and Homer have done; and had they not been connected with *religion*, we may be permitted to express the belief, that the Jewish *classics*, with the classics of Greece and Rome, would have been allowed an honourable place in all the seminaries of learning, and in all the public and private libraries of the land.

§ 3. *The Times of Isaiah.*

Isaiah, as we have seen, lived for the greater part of a century, and possibly even more than a century. It is probable also that for a period of more than seventy years he exercised the prophetic office. During that long period, important changes must have occurred; and a knowledge of some of the leading events of his time is necessary to understand his prophecies. Indeed a simple knowledge of historical facts will often make portions of his prophecies clear which would be otherwise entirely unintelligible.

The kingdom of Israel, which during the reigns of David and Solomon had been so mighty and so magnificent, was divided into two separate kingdoms 990 years before Christ, or two hundred and forty years before Isaiah entered on his prophetic office. The glory of these kingdoms had departed; and they had been greatly weakened by contentions with each other, and by conflicts with surrounding nations. In a particular manner, the kingdom of Israel, or

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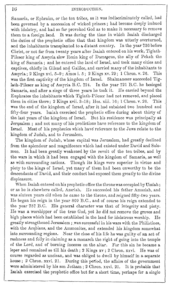

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Samaria, or Ephraim, or the ten tribes, as it was indiscriminately called, had been governed by a succession of wicked princes; had become deeply imbued with idolatry, and had so far provoked God as to make it necessary to remove them to a foreign land. It was during the time in which Isaiah discharged the duties of the prophetic office that that kingdom was utterly overturned, and the inhabitants transplanted to a distant country. In the year 736 before Christ, or not far from twenty years after Isaiah entered on his work, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria slew Rezin king of Damascus, the ally of Pekah the king of Samaria; and he entered the land of Israel, and took many cities and captives, chiefly in Gilead and Galilee, and carried many of the inhabitants to Assyria; 2 Kings xvi. 5–9; Amos i. 5; 2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26. This was the first captivity of the kingdom of Israel. Shalmaneser succeeded Tiglath-Pileser as king of Assyria B.C. 724. In the year 721 B.C. he besieged Samaria, and after a siege of three years he took it. He carried beyond the Euphrates the inhabitants which Tiglath-Pileser had not removed, and placed them in cities there; 2 Kings xvii. 3–18; Hos. xiii. 16; 1 Chron. v. 26. This was the end of the kingdom of Israel, after it had subsisted two hundred and fifty-four years. Isaiah exercised the prophetic office during about thirty of the last years of the kingdom of Israel. But his residence was principally at Jerusalem; and not many of his predictions have reference to the kingdom of Israel. Most of his prophecies which have reference to the Jews relate to the kingdom of Judah, and to Jerusalem.

The kingdom of Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem, had greatly declined from the splendour and magnificence which had existed under David and Solomon. It had been greatly weakened by the revolt of the ten tribes, and by the wars in which it had been engaged with the kingdom of Samaria, as well as with surrounding nations. Though its kings were superior in virtue and piety to the kings of Israel, yet many of them had been unworthy to be the descendants of David, and their conduct had exposed them greatly to the divine displeasure.

When Isaiah entered on his prophetic office the throne was occupied by Uzziah; or as he is elsewhere called, Azariah. He succeeded his father Amaziah, and was sixteen years old when he came to the throne, and reigned fifty-two years. He began his reign in the year 809 B.C., and of course his reign extended to the year 757 B.C. His general character was that of integrity and piety. He was a worshipper of the true God, yet he did not remove the groves and high places which had been established in the land for idolatrous worship. He greatly strengthened Jerusalem; was successful in his wars with the Philistines, with the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and extended his kingdom somewhat into surrounding regions. Near the close of his life he was guilty of an act of rashness and folly in claiming as a monarch the right of going into the temple of the Lord, and of burning incense on the altar. For this sin he became a leper and remained so till his death; 2 Kings xv; 2 Chron. xxvi. He was of course regarded as unclean, and was obliged to dwell by himself in a separate house; 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. During this period, the affairs of the government were administered by his son Jotham; 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. It is probable that Isaiah exercised the prophetic office but for a short time, perhaps for a single

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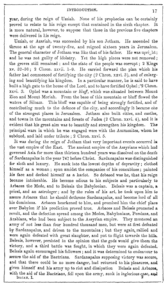

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year, during the reign of Uzziah. None of his prophecies can be certainly proved to relate to his reign except that contained in the sixth chapter. It is more natural, however, to suppose that those in the previous five chapters were delivered in his reign.

Uzziah, or Azariah, was succeeded by his son Jotham. He ascended the throne at the age of twenty-five, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. The general character of Jotham was like that of his father. He was upright; and he was not guilty of idolatry. Yet the high places were not removed; the groves still remained; and the state of the people was corrupt; 2 Kings xv. 32–36; 2 Chron. xxvii. 1–9. He carried forward the plan which his father had commenced of fortifying the city (2 Chron. xxvi. 3), and of enlarging and beautifying his kingdom. In a particular manner, he is said to have built a high gate to the house of the Lord, and to have fortified Ophel; 2 Chron. xxvi. 3. Ophel was a mountain or *bluff*, which was situated between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. From the base of this mountain or bluff flowed the waters of Siloam. This bluff was capable of being strongly fortified, and of contributing much to the defence of the city, and accordingly it became one of the strongest places in Jerusalem. Jotham also built cities, and castles, and towns in the mountains and forests of Judea (2 Chron. xxvi. 4), and it is evident that his great aim was to beautify and strengthen his kingdom. The principal wars in which he was engaged were with the Ammonites, whom he subdued, and laid under tribute; 2 Chron. xxvi. 5.

It was during the reign of Jotham that very important events occurred in the vast empire of the East. The ancient empire of the Assyrians which had governed Asia for more than thirteen hundred years was dissolved on the death of Sardanapalus in the year 747 before Christ. Sardanapalus was distinguished for sloth and luxury. He sunk into the lowest depths of depravity; clothed himself as a woman; spun amidst the companies of his concubines; painted his face and decked himself as a harlot. So debased was he, that his reign became intolerable. He became odious to his subjects and particularly to Arbaces the Mede, and to Belesis the Babylonian. Belesis was a captain, a priest, and an astrologer; and by the rules of his art, he took upon him to assure Arbaces that he should dethrone Sardanapalus, and become lord of all his dominions. Arbaces hearkened to him, and promised him the chief place over Babylon if his prediction proved true. Arbaces and Belesis promoted a revolt, and the defection spread among the Medes, Babylonians, Persians, and Arabians, who had been subject to the Assyrian empire. They mustered an army of not less than four hundred thousand men, but were at first defeated by Sardanapalus, and driven to the mountains; but they again rallied and were again defeated with great slaughter, and put to flight towards the hills. Belesis, however, persisted in the opinion that the gods would give them the victory, and a third battle was fought, in which they were again defeated. Belesis again encouraged his followers; and it was determined to endeavour to secure the aid of the Bactrians. Sardanapalus supposing victory was secure, and that there could be no more danger, had returned to his pleasures, and given himself and his army up to riot and dissipation. Belesis and Arbaces, with the aid of the Bactrians, fell upon the army, sunk in inglorious ease, and

Isaiah, I. 2

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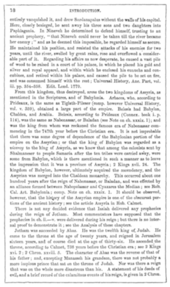

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entirely vanquished it, and drew Sardanapalus without the walls of his capital. Here, closely besieged, he sent away his three sons and two daughters into Paphlagonia. In Nineveh he determined to defend himself, trusting to an ancient prophecy, "that Nineveh could never be taken till the river became her enemy;" and as he deemed this impossible, he regarded himself as secure. He maintained his position, and resisted the attacks of his enemies for two years, until the river, swelled by great rains, rose and overflowed a considerable part of it. Regarding his affairs as now desperate, he caused a vast pile of wood to be raised in a court of his palace, in which he placed his gold and silver and royal apparel, and within which he enclosed his eunuchs and concubines, and retired within his palace, and caused the pile to be set on fire, and was consumed himself with the rest; Universal History, Anc. Part, vol. iii. pp. 354–358. Edit. Lond. 1779.

From this kingdom, thus destroyed, arose the two kingdoms of Assyria, as mentioned in the Scriptures, and of Babylonia. Arbaces, who, according to Prideaux, is the same as Tiglath-Pileser (comp. however Universal History, vol. v. 359), obtained a large part of the empire. Belesis had Babylon, Chaldea, and Arabia. Belesis, according to Prideaux (Connex. book i. p. 114), was the same as Nabonassar, or Baladan (see Note on ch. xxxix. 1); and was the king from whom was reckoned the famous era of Nabonassar commencing in the 747th year before the Christian era. It is not improbable that there was some degree of dependence of the Babylonian portion of the empire on the Assyrian; or that the king of Babylon was regarded as a *viceroy* to the king of Assyria, as we know that among the colonists sent by Shalmaneser to people Samaria after the ten tribes were carried away, were some from Babylon, which is there mentioned in such a manner as to leave the impression that it was a province of Assyria; 2 Kings xvii. 24. The kingdom of Babylon, however, ultimately acquired the ascendency, and the Assyrian was merged into the Chaldean monarchy. This occurred about one hundred years after the reign of Nabonassar, or Baladan, and was effected by an alliance formed between Nabopolassar and Cyaxares the Median; see Rob. Cal. Art. Babylonia; comp. Note on ch. xxxix. 1. It should be observed, however, that the history of the Assyrian empire is one of the obscurest portions of the ancient history; see the article Assyria in Rob. Calmet.

There is not any decided evidence that Isaiah delivered any prophecies during the reign of Jotham. Most commentators have supposed that the prophecies in ch. ii.—v. were delivered during his reign; but there is no internal proof to demonstrate it; see the Analysis of these chapters.

Jotham was succeeded by Ahaz. He was the twelfth king of Judah. He came to the throne at the age of twenty years, and reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years, and of course died at the age of thirty-six. He ascended the throne, according to Calmet, 738 years before the Christian era; see 2 Kings xvi. 2; 2 Chron. xxviii. 5. The character of Ahaz was the reverse of that of his father; and, excepting Manasseh his grandson, there was not probably a more impious prince that sat on the throne of Judah. Nor was there a reign that was on the whole more disastrous than his. A statement of his deeds of evil, and a brief record of the calamitous events of his reign, is given in 2 Chron.

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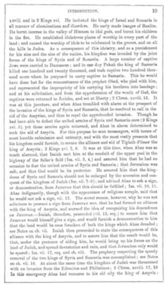

INTRODUCTION. 19

xxviii. and in 2 Kings xvi. He imitated the kings of Israel and Samaria in all manner of abominations and disorders. He early made images of Baalim. He burnt incense in the valley of Hinnom to idol gods, and burnt his children in the fire. He established idolatrous places of worship in every part of the land; and caused the worship of idols to be celebrated in the groves, and on all the hills in Judea. As a consequence of this idolatry, and as a punishment for his sins and the sins of the nation, his kingdom was invaded by the joint forces of the kings of Syria and of Samaria. A large number of captive Jews were carried to Damascus; and in one day Pekah the king of Samaria killed one hundred and twenty thousand, and took captive two hundred thousand more whom he purposed to carry captive to Samaria. This he would have done but for the remonstrance of the prophet Obed, who plead with him, and represented the impropriety of his carrying his brethren into bondage; and at his solicitation, and from the apprehension of the wrath of God, the captives were returned to Jericho, and set at liberty; 2 Chron. xxviii. 15. It was at this juncture, and when Ahaz trembled with alarm at the prospect of the invasion of the kings of Syria and Samaria, that he resolved to call in the aid of the Assyrian, and thus to repel the apprehended invasion. Though he had been able to defeat the united armies of Syria and Samaria once (2 Kings xvi. 5), yet those armies again returned, and Ahaz in alarm determined to seek the aid of Assyria. For this purpose he sent messengers, with terms of most humble submission and entreaty, and with the most costly presents that his kingdom could furnish, to secure the alliance and aid of Tiglath-Pileser the king of Assyria; 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8. It was at this time, when Ahaz was so much alarmed, that Isaiah met him at the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field (Isa. vii. 3, 4,) and assured him that he had no occasion to fear the united armies of Syria and Samaria; that Jerusalem was safe, and that God would be its protector. He assured him that the kingdoms of Syria and Samaria should not be enlarged by the accession and conquest of the kingdom of Judah (Isa. vii. 7–9); and advised Ahaz to ask a sign, or demonstration, from JEHOVAH that this should be fulfilled; Isa. vii. 10, 11. Ahaz indignantly, though with the appearance of religious scruple, said that he would *not* ask a sign, vii. 12. The *secret* reason, however, why he was not solicitous to procure a sign from JEHOVAH was, that he had formed an alliance with the king of Assyria, and scorned the idea of recognizing his dependence on JEHOVAH.—Isaiah, therefore, proceeded (vii. 13, seq.) to assure him that JEHOVAH would himself give a sign, and would furnish a demonstration to him that the land would be soon forsaken of both the kings which Ahaz dreaded; see Notes on ch. vii. Isaiah then proceeded to state the consequences of this alliance with the king of Assyria, and to assure him that the result would be, that, under the pretence of aiding him, he would bring up his forces on the land of Judah, and spread devastation and ruin, and that Jerusalem only would be spared; Isa. vii. 17, seq. and ch. viii. The prophecy respecting the speedy removal of the two kings of Syria and Samaria was accomplished; see Notes on ch. vii. 16. At about the same time the kingdom of Judah was threatened with an invasion from the Edomites and Philistines; 2 Chron. xxviii. 17, 18 In this emergency Ahaz had recourse to his old ally the king of Assyria:

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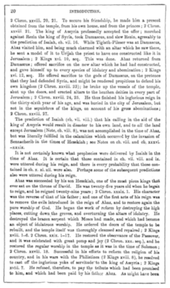

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2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21. To secure his friendship, he made him a present obtained from the temple, from his own house, and from the princes; 2 Chron. xxviii. 21. The king of Assyria professedly accepted the offer; marched against Rezin the king of Syria, took Damascus, and slew Rezin, agreeably to the prediction of Isaiah, ch. vii. 16. While Tiglath-Pileser was at Damascus, Ahaz visited him, and being much charmed with an altar which he saw there, he sent a model of it to Urijah the priest to have one constructed like it in Jerusalem; 2 Kings xvi. 10, seq. This was done. Ahaz returned from Damascus; offered sacrifice on the new altar which he had had constructed, and gave himself up to every species of idolatry and abomination; 2 Kings xvi. 12, seq. He offered sacrifice to the gods of Damascus, on the pretence that they had defended Syria, and might be rendered propitious to defend his own kingdom (2 Chron. xxviii. 23); he broke up the vessels of the temple, shut up the doors, and erected altars to the heathen deities in every part of Jerusalem; 2 Chron. xxviii. 24, 25. He thus finished his inglorious reign in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but not in the sepulchres of the kings, on account of his gross abominations; 2 Chron. xxviii. 27.

The prediction of Isaiah (ch. vii. viii.) that his calling in the aid of the king of Assyria would result in disaster to his own land, and to *all* the land except Jerusalem (Note, ch. viii. 8), was not accomplished in the time of Ahaz, but was literally fulfilled in the calamities which occurred by the invasion of Sennacherib in the times of Hezekiah; see Notes on ch. viii. and ch. xxxvi.–xxxix.

It is not *certainly* known what prophecies were delivered by Isaiah in the time of Ahaz. It is certain that those contained in ch. vii. viii. and ix. were uttered during his reign, and there is every probability that those contained in ch. x. xi. xii. were also. Perhaps some of the subsequent predictions also were uttered during his reign.

Ahaz was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, one of the most pious kings that ever sat on the throne of David. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years; 2 Chron. xxxix. 1. His character was the reverse of that of his father; and one of the first acts of his reign was to remove the evils introduced in the reign of Ahaz, and to restore again the pure worship of God. He began the work of *reform* by destroying the high places, cutting down the groves, and overturning the altars of idolatry. He destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses had made, and which had become an object of idolatrous worship. He ordered the doors of the temple to be rebuilt, and the temple itself was thoroughly cleansed and repaired; 2 Kings xviii. 1–6. 2 Chron. xxix. 1–17. He restored the observance of the Passover, and it was celebrated with great pomp and joy (2 Chron. xxx. seq.), and he restored the regular worship in the temple as it was in the time of Solomon; 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. Successful in his efforts to reform the religion of his country, and in his wars with the Philistines (2 Kings xviii. 8), he resolved to cast off the inglorious yoke of servitude to the king of Assyria; 2 Kings xviii. 7. He refused, therefore, to pay the tribute which had been promised to him, and which had been paid by his father Ahaz. As might have been

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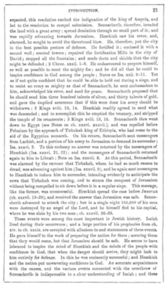

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expected, this resolution excited the indignation of the king of Assyria, and led to the resolution to compel submission. Sennacherib, therefore, invaded the land with a great army; spread desolation through no small part of it; and was rapidly advancing towards Jerusalem. Hezekiah saw his error, and, alarmed, he sought to avoid the threatened blow. He, therefore, put the city in the best possible posture of defence. He fortified it; enclosed it with a second wall; erected towers; repaired the fortification Millo in the city of David; stopped all the fountains; and made darts and shields that the city might be defended; 2 Chron. xxxii. 1–8. He endeavoured to prepare himself, as well as possible to meet the mighty foe; and he did all that he could to inspire confidence in God among the people; Notes on Isa. xxii. 9–11. Yet as if not quite confident that he could be able to hold out during a siege, and to resist an army so mighty as that of Sennacherib, he sent ambassadors to him, acknowledged his error, and sued for peace. Sennacherib proposed that he should send him three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, and gave the *implied* assurance that if this were done his army should be withdrawn; 2 Kings xviii. 13, 14. Hezekiah readily agreed to send what was demanded; and to accomplish this he emptied the treasury, and stripped the temple of its ornaments; 2 Kings xviii. 15, 16. Sennacherib *then* went down to Egypt (see Notes on ch. xxxvi. xxxvii.), and was repelled before Pelusium by the approach of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, who had come to the aid of the Egyptian monarch. On his return, Sennacherib sent messengers from Lachish, and a portion of his army to Jerusalem to demand its surrender; Isa. xxxvi. 2. To this embassy no answer was returned by the messengers of Hezekiah (Isa. xxxvi. 21, 22); and the messengers of Sennacherib returned again to him to Libnah; Note on Isa. xxxvii. 8. At this period, Sennacherib was alarmed by the rumour that Tirhakah, whom he had so much reason to dread, was advancing against him (Isa. xxxvii. 9), and he again sent messengers to Hezekiah to induce him to surrender, intending evidently to anticipate the news that Tirhakah was coming, and to secure the conquest of Jerusalem without being compelled to sit down before it in a regular siege. This message, like the former, was unsuccessful. Hezekiah spread the case before JEHOVAH (ch. xxxvii. 15–20), and received the answer that Jerusalem was safe. Sennacherib advanced to attack the city; but in a single night 185,000 of his men were destroyed by an angel of the Lord, and he himself fled to his capital, where he was slain by his two sons; ch. xxxvii. 36–38.

These events were among the most important in Jewish history. Isaiah lived during their occurrence; and a large portion of his prophecies from ch. xiv. to ch. xxxix. are occupied with allusions to and statements of these events. He gave himself to the work of preparing the nation for them; assuring them that they would come, but that Jerusalem should be safe. He seems to have laboured to inspire the mind of Hezekiah and the minds of the people with confidence in God, that when the danger should arrive, they might look to him entirely for defence. In this he was eminently successful; and Hezekiah and the nation put unwavering confidence in God. An accurate acquaintance with the causes, and the various events connected with the overthrow of Sennacherib is indispensable to a clear understanding of Isaiah; and these

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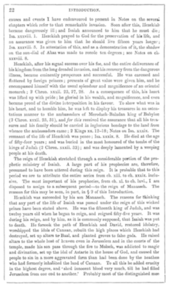

causes and events I have endeavoured to present in Notes on the several chapters which refer to that remarkable invasion. Soon after this, Hezekiah became dangerously ill; and Isaiah announced to him that he must die; Isa. xxxviii. 1. Hezekiah prayed to God for the preservation of his life, and an assurance was given to him that he should live fifteen years longer; Isa. xxxviii. 5. In attestation of this, and as a demonstration of it, the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz was made to recede ten degrees; see Notes on ch. xxxviii. 8.

Hezekiah, after his signal success over his foe, and the entire deliverance of his kingdom from the long dreaded invasion, and his recovery from the dangerous illness, became eminently prosperous and successful. He was caressed and flattered by foreign princes; presents of great value were given him, and he encompassed himself with the usual splendour and magnificence of an oriental monarch; 2 Chron. xxxii. 23, 27, 28. As a consequence of this, his heart was lifted up with pride; he gloried in his wealth, and magnificence, and even became proud of the divine interposition in his favour. To show what was in his heart, and to humble him, he was left to display his treasures in an ostentatious manner to the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan king of Babylon (2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31), and *for this* received the assurance that all his treasures and his family should be carried in inglorious bondage to the land from whence the ambassadors came; 2 Kings xx. 12–18; Notes on Isa. xxxix. The remnant of the life of Hezekiah was peace; Isa. xxxix. 8. He died at the age of fifty-four years; and was buried in the most honoured of the tombs of the kings of Judah (2 Chron. xxxii. 33); and was deeply lamented by a weeping people at his death.

The reign of Hezekiah stretched through a considerable portion of the prophetic ministry of Isaiah. A large part of his prophecies are, therefore, presumed to have been uttered during this reign. It is probable that to this period we are to attribute the entire series from ch. xiii. to ch. xxxix. inclusive. The most important of his prophecies, from ch. xl. to ch. lxvi., I am disposed to assign to a subsequent period—to the reign of Manasseh. The reasons for this may be seen, in part, in § 2 of this Introduction.

Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh. The reasons for thinking that any part of the life of Isaiah was passed under the reign of this wicked prince have been stated above. He was the fifteenth king of Judah, and was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty-five years. It was during his reign, and by him, as it is commonly supposed, that Isaiah was put to death. He forsook the path of Hezekiah and David, restored idolatry, worshipped the idols of Canaan, rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah had destroyed, set up altars to Baal, and planted groves to false gods. He raised altars to the whole host of heaven even in Jerusalem and in the courts of the temple, made his son pass through the fire to Moloch, was addicted to magic and divination, set up the idol of Astarte in the house of God, and caused the people to sin in a more aggravated form than had been done by the heathen who had formerly inhabited the land of Canaan. To all this he added cruelty in the highest degree, and 'shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.' Probably most of the distinguished men

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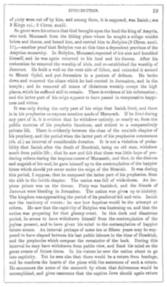

of piety were cut off by him, and among them, it is supposed, was Isaiah; see 2 Kings xxi.; 2 Chron. xxxiii.

So great were his crimes that God brought upon the land the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh from the hiding place where he sought a refuge amidst briers and thorns, and bound him, and carried him to *Babylon* (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11),—another proof that Babylon was at this time a dependent province of the Assyrian monarchy. In Babylon, Manasseh repented of his sins and humbled himself, and he was again returned to his land and his throne. After his restoration he removed the worship of idols, and re-established the worship of JEHOVAH. He built a wall on the west side of Gihon, and extended it around to Mount Ophel, and put Jerusalem in a posture of defence. He broke down and removed the altars which he had erected in Jerusalem, and in the temple; and he removed all traces of idolatrous worship except the high places, which he suffered still to remain. There is evidence of his reformation; and the latter part of his reign appears to have passed in comparative happiness and virtue.

It was only during the early part of his reign that Isaiah lived, and there is in his prophecies no express mention made of Manasseh. If he lived during any part of it, it is evident that he withdrew entirely, or nearly so, from the public exercise of his prophetic functions, and retired to a comparatively private life. There is evidently between the close of the xxxixth chapter of his prophecy, and the period when the latter part of his prophecies commences (ch. xl.) an interval of considerable duration. It is not a violation of probability that Isaiah after the death of Hezekiah, being an old man, withdrew much from public life; that he saw and felt that there was little hope of producing reform during the impious career of Manasseh; and that, in the distress and anguish of his soul, he gave himself up to the contemplation of the happier times which should yet occur under the reign of the Messiah. It was during this period, I suppose, that he composed the latter part of his prophecies, from the xlth to the lxvith chapter. The nation was full of wickedness. An impious prince was on the throne. Piety was banished, and the friends of JEHOVAH were bleeding in Jerusalem. The nation was given up to idolatry. The kingdom was approaching the period of its predicted fall and ruin. Isaiah saw the tendency of events; he saw how hopeless would be the attempt at reform. He saw that the captivity of Babylon was hastening on, and that the nation was preparing for that gloomy event. In this dark and disastrous period, he seems to have withdrawn himself from the contemplation of the joyless present, and to have given his mind to the contemplation of happier future scenes. An interval perhaps of some ten or fifteen years may be supposed to have elapsed between his last public labours in the time of Hezekiah, and the prophecies which compose the remainder of the book. During this interval he may have withdrawn from public view, and fixed his mind on the great events of future times. In his visions he sees the nation about to go into captivity. Yet he sees also that there would be a return from bondage, and he comforts the hearts of the pious with the assurance of such a return. He announces the name of the monarch by whom that deliverance would be accomplished, and gives assurance that the captive Jews should again return

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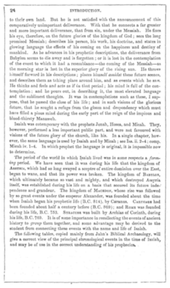

to their own land. But he is not satisfied with the announcement of this comparatively unimportant deliverance. With that he connects a far greater and more important deliverance, that from sin, under the Messiah. He fixes his eye, therefore, on the future glories of the kingdom of God; sees the long promised Messiah; describes his person, his work, his doctrine, and states in glowing language the effects of his coming on the happiness and destiny of mankind. As he advances in his prophetic descriptions, the deliverance from Babylon seems to die away and is forgotten; or it is lost in the contemplation of the event to which it had a resemblance—the coming of the Messiah—as the morning star is lost in the superior glory of the rising sun. He throws himself forward in his descriptions; places himself *amidst* these future scenes, and describes them as taking place around him, and as events which he saw. He thinks and feels and acts as *if in* that period; his mind is full of the contemplation; and he pours out, in describing it, the most elevated language and the sublimest thoughts. It was in contemplations such as these, I suppose, that he passed the close of his life; and in such visions of the glorious future, that he sought a refuge from the gloom and despondency which must have filled a pious mind during the early part of the reign of the impious and blood-thirsty Manasseh.

Isaiah was cotemporary with the prophets Jonah, Hosea, and Micah. They, however, performed a less important public part, and were not favoured with visions of the future glory of the church, like his. In a single chapter, however, the same language is used by Isaiah and by Micah; see Isa. ii. 2–4; comp. Micah iv. 1–4. In which prophet the language is original, it is impossible now to determine.

The period of the world in which Isaiah lived was in some respects a *forming* period. We have seen that it was during his life that the kingdom of ASSYRIA, which had so long swayed a sceptre of entire dominion over the East, began to wane, and that its power was broken. The kingdom of BABYLON, which ultimately became so vast and mighty, and which destroyed Assyria itself, was established during his life on a basis that secured its future independence and grandeur. The kingdom of MACEDON, whose rise was followed by so great events under the emperor Alexander, was founded about the time when Isaiah began his prophetic life (B.C. 814), by Caranus. CARTHAGE had been founded about half a century before (B.C. 869); and ROME was founded during his life, B.C. 753. SYRACUSE was built by Archias of Corinth, during his life, B.C. 769. It is of some importance in recollecting the events of ancient history to *group* them together, and some advantage may be derived to the student from connecting these events with the name and life of Isaiah.

The following tables, copied mainly from Jahn's Biblical Archaeology, will give a correct view of the principal chronological events in the time of Isaiah, and may be of use in the correct understanding of his prophecies.

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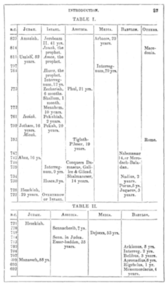

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TABLE I.

B.C.	JUDAH.	ISRAEL.	ASSYRIA.	MEDIA.	BABYLON.	OTHERS.
825	Amaziah.	Jeroboam II. 41 yrs.		Arbaces, 28 years.		
814		*Jonah*, the prophet.				Macedonia.
811	Uzziah, 52 years.	*Amos*, the prophet.				
797				Interregnum, 79 yrs.		
784		*Hosea*, the prophet. Interregnum, 12 ys.				
773		Zechariah, 6 months. Shallum, 1 month.	Phul, 21 yrs.			
772		Menahem, 10 years.				
761	*Isaiah.*	Pekahiah, 2 years.				
759	Jotham, 16 years. *Micah.*	Pekah, 20 years.				
753			Tiglath-Pileser, 19 years.			Rome.
747					Nabonassar 14, or Merodach-Baladan.	
743	Ahaz, 16 ys.					
740			Conquers Damascus, Galilee & Gilead.			
739		Interregnum, 9 yrs.				
734			Shalmaneser, 14 years.		Nadius, 2 years.	
730		Hosea, 9 ys.			Porus, 5 ys.	
728	Hezekiah, 29 years.				Jugaeus, 5 years.	
722		OVERTHROW OF ISRAEL.				

TABLE II.

B.C.	JUDAH.	ASSYRIA.	MEDIA.	BABYLON.
721	Hezekiah.			
720		Sennacherib, 7 ys.		
718			Dejoces, 53 yrs.	
714		Senn. in Judea.		
713		Esar-haddon, 35 years.		
709				Arkianus, 5 yrs.
704				Interreg. 2 yrs.
702				Belibus, 3 years.
699	Manasseh, 55 ys.			Aponadius, 6 yrs.
693				Rigebelus, 1 yr.
692				Mesesemordacus, 4 years.

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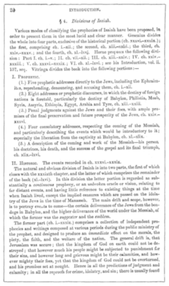

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§ 4. *Divisions of Isaiah.*

Various modes of classifying the prophecies of Isaiah have been proposed, in order to present them in the most lucid and clear manner. Gesenius divides the whole into four parts, exclusive of the historical portion (ch. xxxvi.–xxxix.); the first, comprising ch. i.–xii.; the second, ch. xiii.–xxiii.; the third, ch. xxiv.–xxxv.; and the fourth, ch. xl.–lxvi. Horne proposes the following division: Part I. ch. i.–v.; II. ch. vii.–xii.; III. ch. xiii.–xxiv.; IV. ch. xxiv.–xxxiii.; V. ch. xxxvi.–xxxix.; VI. ch. xl.–lxvi.; see his Introduction, vol. ii. 157, seq. Vitringa divides the book into the following portions:—

I. PROPHETIC.

(1.) Five prophetic addresses directly to the *Jews*, including the Ephraimites, reprehending, denouncing, and accusing them, ch. i.–xii.

(2.) Eight addresses or prophetic discourses, in which the destiny of foreign nations is foretold, particularly the destiny of Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Assyria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Arabia and Tyre, ch. xiii.–xxiii.

(3.) Penal judgments against the Jews and their foes, with ample promises of the final preservation and future prosperity of the Jews, ch. xxiv.–xxxvi.

(4.) Four consolatory addresses, respecting the coming of the Messiah, and particularly describing the events which would be introductory to it; especially the liberation from the captivity at Babylon, ch. xl.–xlix.

(5.) A description of the coming and work of the Messiah—his person his doctrines, his death, and the success of the gospel and its final triumph, ch. xlix.–lxvi.

II. HISTORIC. The events recorded in ch. xxxvi.–xxxix.

The natural and obvious division of Isaiah is into two parts, the first of which closes with the xxxixth chapter, and the latter of which comprises the remainder of the book (xl.–lxvi). In this division the latter portion is regarded as substantially a *continuous* prophecy, or an *unbroken* oracle or vision, relating to far distant events, and having little reference to existing things at the time when Isaiah lived, except the implied censures which are passed on the idolatry of the Jews in the time of Manasseh. The main drift and scope, however, is to portray events to come—the certain deliverance of the Jews from the bondage in Babylon, and the higher deliverance of the world under the Messiah, of which the former was the *suggester* and the *emblem*.

The former part (ch. i.–xxxix.) comprises a collection of independent prophecies and writings composed at various periods during the public ministry of the prophet, and designed to produce an *immediate* effect on the morals, the piety, the faith, and the welfare of the nation. The general drift is, that Jerusalem was secure; that the kingdom of God on earth could not be destroyed; that however much his people might be subjected to punishment for their sins, and however long and grievous might be their calamities, and however mighty their foes, yet that the kingdom of God could not be overturned, and his promises set at nought. Hence in all the predictions of judgment and calamity; in all the reproofs for crime, idolatry, and sin; there is usually found

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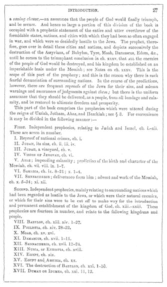

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a *saving clause*,—an assurance that the people of God would finally triumph, and be secure. And hence so large a portion of this division of the book is occupied with a prophetic statement of the entire and utter overthrow of the formidable states, nations, and cities with which they had been so often engaged in war, and which were so decidedly hostile to the Jews. The prophet, therefore, goes over in detail these cities and nations, and depicts successively the destruction of the Assyrians, of Babylon, Tyre, Moab, Damascus, Edom, &c., until he comes to the triumphant conclusion in ch. xxxv. that ALL the enemies of the people of God would be destroyed, and his kingdom be established on an imperishable basis under the Messiah; see Notes on ch. xxxv. This is the scope of this part of the prophecy; and this is the reason why there is such fearful denunciation of surrounding nations. In the course of the predictions, however, there are frequent reproofs of the Jews for their sins, and solemn warnings and assurances of judgments against *them*; but there is the uniform assurance that they should be delivered, as a people, from all bondage and calamity, and be restored to ultimate freedom and prosperity.

This part of the book comprises the prophecies which were uttered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; see § 3. For convenience it may be divided in the following manner:—

FIRST. Independent prophecies, relating to Judah and Israel, ch. i.–xii. These are seven in number.

I. Reproof of national crimes, ch. i.
II. JUDAH, its sins, ch. ii. iii. iv.
III. JUDAH, a vineyard, ch. v.
IV. VISION OF JEHOVAH, ch. vi.
V. AHAZ; impending calamity; prediction of the birth and character of the Messiah, ch. vii. viii. ix. 1–7.
VI. SAMARIA, ch. ix. 8–21; x. 1–4.
VII. SENNACHERIB; deliverance from him; advent and work of the Messiah, ch. x. 5–34; xi. xii.

SECOND. Independent prophecies, mainly relating to surrounding nations which had been regarded as hostile to the Jews, or which were their natural enemies, or which for their sins were to be cut off to make way for the introduction and permanent establishment of the kingdom of God, ch. xiii.–xxiii. These prophecies are fourteen in number, and relate to the following kingdoms and people.

VIII. BABYLON, ch. xiii. xiv. 1–27.
IX. PHILISTIA, ch. xiv. 28–32.
X. MOAB, ch. xv. xvi.
XI. DAMASCUS, ch. xvii. 1–11.
XII. SENNACHERIB, ch. xvii. 12–14.
XIII. NUBIA, or ETHIOPIA, ch. xviii.
XIV. EGYPT, ch. xix.
XV. EGYPT and ASSYRIA, ch. xx.
XVI. The destruction of BABYLON, ch. xxi. 1–10.
XVII. DUMAH OR IDUMEA, ch. xxi. 11, 12.

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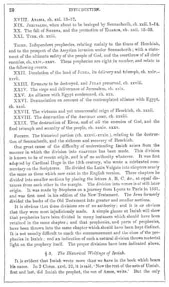

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XVIII. Arabia, ch. xxi. 13–17.
XIX. Jerusalem, when about to be besieged by Sennacherib, ch. xxii. 1–14.
XX. The fall of Shebna, and the promotion of Eliakim, ch. xxii. 15–25.
XXI. Tyre, ch. xxiii.

Third. Independent prophecies, relating mainly to the times of Hezekiah, and to the prospect of the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib; with a statement of the ultimate safety of the people of God, and the overthrow of all their enemies, ch. xxiv.–xxxv. These prophecies are eight in number, and relate to the following events.

XXII. Desolation of the land of Judea, its delivery and triumph, ch. xxiv.–xxvii.
XXIII. Ephraim to be destroyed, and Judah preserved, ch. xxviii.
XXIV. The siege and deliverance of Jerusalem, ch. xxix.
XXV. An alliance with Egypt condemned, ch. xxx.
XXVI. Denunciation on account of the contemplated alliance with Egypt, ch. xxxi.
XXVII. The virtuous and yet unsuccessful reign of Hezekiah, ch. xxxii.
XXVIII. The destruction of the Assyrian army, ch. xxxiii.
XXIX. The destruction of Edom, and of *all* the enemies of God, and the final triumph and security of the people, ch. xxxiv. xxxv.

Fourth. The historical portion (ch. xxxvi.-xxxix.), relating to the destruction of Sennacherib, and the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah.

One great cause of the difficulty of understanding Isaiah arises from the manner in which the division into CHAPTERS has been made. This division is known to be of recent origin, and is of no authority whatever. It was first adopted by Cardinal Hugo in the 13th century, who wrote a celebrated commentary on the Scriptures. He divided the Latin Vulgate into chapters nearly the same as those which now exist in the English version. These chapters he divided into smaller sections by placing the letters A, B, C, &c., at equal distances from each other in the margin. The division into verses is of still later origin. It was made by Stephens on a journey from Lyons to Paris in 1551, and was first used in his edition of the New Testament. The Jews formerly divided the books of the Old Testament into greater and smaller sections.

It is obvious that these divisions are of no authority; and it is *as* obvious that they were most injudiciously made. A simple glance at Isaiah will show that prophecies have been divided in many instances which should have been retained in the same chapter; and that prophecies, and parts of prophecies, have been thrown into the same chapter which should have been kept distinct. It is not usually difficult to mark the commencement and the close of the prophecies in Isaiah; and an indication of such a natural division throws material light on the prophecy itself. The proper divisions have been indicated above.

§ 5. *The Historical Writings of Isaiah.*

It is evident that Isaiah wrote more than we have in the book which bears his name. In 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, it is said, 'Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, write.' But the only

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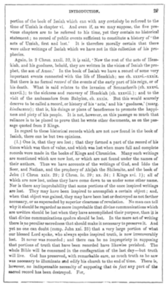

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portion of the book of Isaiah which can with any *certainty* be referred to the time of Uzziah is chapter vi. And even if, as we may suppose, the five previous chapters are to be referred to his time, yet they contain no historical statement; no record of public events sufficient to constitute a history of 'the acts of Uzziah, first and last.' It is therefore morally certain that there were other writings of Isaiah which we have not in this collection of his prophecies.

Again, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 32, it is said, 'Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.' In the book of Isaiah we have a record of some very important events connected with the life of Hezekiah; see ch. xxxvi.–xxxix. But there is no formal *record* of the events of the early part of his reign, or of his death. What is said relates to the invasion of Sennacherib (ch. xxxvi. xxxvii.); to the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah (ch. xxxviii.); and to the visit of the ambassadors from Babylon, ch. xxxix. But this would scarcely deserve to be called a record, or history of his 'acts,' and his 'goodness,' (marg. *kindnesses*); that is, his doings or plans of beneficence to promote the happiness and piety of his people. It is not, however, on this passage so much that reliance is to be placed to prove that he wrote other documents, as on the passage quoted from 2 Kings.

In regard to these historical records which are not now found in the book of Isaiah, there can be but two opinions.

(1.) One is, that they are lost; that they formed a part of the record of his times which was then of value, and which was lost when more full and complete records were made in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Many such writings are mentioned which are now lost, or which are not found under the names of their authors. Thus we have accounts of the writings of Gad, and Iddo the Seer, and Nathan, and the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the book of Jehu (1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xx. 34; 1 Kings xvi. 1); all of which are now lost, unless they have come down to us under some other name. Nor is there any improbability that some portions of the once inspired writings are lost. They may have been inspired to accomplish a certain *object*; and, when that object was gained, they may have been lost or destroyed as not farther necessary, or as superseded by superior clearness of revelation. No man can tell why it should be regarded as more improbable that divine communications which are *written* should be lost when they have accomplished their purpose, than it is that divine communications *spoken* should be lost. In the mere act of writing there is no peculiar sacredness that should make it necessary to preserve it. And yet no one can doubt (comp. John xxi. 25) that a very large portion of what our blessed Lord spoke, who always spoke inspired truth, is now irrecoverably lost. It never was recorded; and there can be no impropriety in supposing that portions of truth that have been recorded have likewise perished. The whole Bible will be consumed in the conflagration of the last day—but truth will live. God has preserved, with remarkable care, as much truth as he saw was necessary to illuminate and edify his church to the end of time. There is, however, no indispensable necessity of supposing that *in fact* any part of the sacred record has been destroyed. For,

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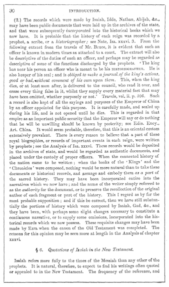

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(2.) The records which were made by Isaiah, Iddo, Nathan, Abijah, &c., may have been public documents that were laid up in the archives of the state, and that were subsequently *incorporated* into the historical books which we now have. It is probable that the history of each reign was recorded by a prophet, a scribe, or a *historiographer;* see Note, Isa. xxxvi. 3. From the following extract from the travels of Mr. Bruce, it is evident that such an officer is known in modern times as attached to a court. The extract will also be descriptive of the duties of such an officer, and perhaps may be regarded as descriptive of some of the functions discharged by the prophets. 'The king has near his person an officer who is meant to be his HISTORIOGRAPHER. He is also keeper of his seal; and is *obliged to make a journal of the king's actions, good or bad, without comment of his own upon them*. This, when the king dies, or at least soon after, is delivered to the council, who read it over, and erase every thing false in it, whilst they supply every material fact that may have been omitted, whether purposely or not.' Travels, vol. ii. p. 506. Such a record is also kept of all the sayings and purposes of the Emperor of China by an officer appointed for this purpose. It is carefully made, and sealed up during his life, and is not opened until he dies. This is regarded in that empire as an important public security that the Emperor will say or do nothing that he will be unwilling should be known by posterity; see Edin. Ency., Art. China. It would seem probable, therefore, that this is an oriental custom extensively prevalent. There is every reason to believe that a part of these royal biographies, or records of important events in each reign, were written by prophets; see the Analysis of Isa. xxxvi. These records would be deposited in the archives of state, and would be regarded as authentic documents, and placed under the custody of proper officers. When the connected history of the nation came to be written; when the books of the 'Kings' and the 'Chronicles' were composed, nothing would be more natural than to take these documents or historical records, and arrange and embody them *as a part* of the sacred history. They may have been incorporated entire into the narratives which we now have; and the name of the writer simply referred to as the *authority* for the document, or to preserve the recollection of the original author of each fragment or part of the history. This I regard as by far the most probable supposition; and if this be correct, then we have still substantially the portions of history which were composed by Isaiah, Gad, &c., and they have been, with perhaps some slight changes necessary to constitute a continuous narrative, or to supply some omissions, incorporated into the historical records which we now possess. These requisite changes may have been made by Ezra when the canon of the Old Testament was completed. The reasons for this opinion may be seen more at length in the Analysis of chapter xxxvi.

§ 6. *Quotations of Isaiah in the New Testament.*

Isaiah refers more fully to the times of the Messiah than any other of the prophets. It is natural, therefore, to expect to find his writings often quoted or appealed to in the New Testament. The frequency of the reference, and

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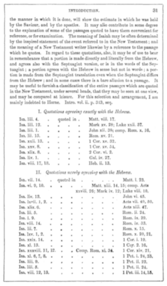

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the manner in which it is done, will show the estimate in which he was held by the Saviour, and by the apostles. It may also contribute in some degree to the explanation of some of the passages quoted to have them convenient for reference, or for examination. The meaning of Isaiah may be often determined by the inspired statement of the event referred to in the New Testament; and the meaning of a New Testament writer likewise by a reference to the passage which he quotes. In regard to these quotations, also, it may be of use to bear in remembrance that a portion is made directly and literally from the Hebrew, and agrees also with the Septuagint version, or is in the words of the Septuagint; a portion agrees with the Hebrew in sense but not in words; a portion is made from the Septuagint translation even when the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew; and in some cases there is a bare allusion to a passage. It may be useful to furnish a classification of the entire passages which are quoted in the New Testament, under several heads, that they may be seen at one view, and may be compared at leisure. For this selection and arrangement, I am mainly indebted to Horne. Intro. vol. ii. p. 313, seq.

I. *Quotations agreeing exactly with the Hebrew.*

Isa. liii. 4.	quoted in	Matt. viii. 17.
Isa. liii. 12.		Mark xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37.
Isa. liii. 1.		John xii. 38; comp. Rom. x. 16.
Isa. lii. 15.		Rom. xv. 21.
Isa. xxii. 13.		1 Cor. xv. 32.
Isa. xxv. 8.		1 Cor. xv. 54.
Isa. xlix. 8.		2 Cor. vi. 2.
Isa. liv. 1.		Gal. iv. 27.
Isa. viii. 17, 18.		Heb. ii. 13.

II. *Quotations nearly agreeing with the Hebrew.*

Isa. vii. 14.	quoted in	Matt. i. 23.
Isa. vi. 9, 10.		Matt. xiii. 14, 15; comp. Acts xxviii. 26; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10.
Isa. liv. 13.		John vi. 45.
Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.		Acts vii. 49, 50.
Isa. xlix. 6.		Acts xiii. 47.
Isa. lii. 5.		Rom. ii. 24.
Isa. i. 9.		Rom. ix. 29.
Isa. viii. 14.		Rom. ix. 33.
Isa. lii. 7.		Rom. x. 15.
Isa. lxv. 1, 2.		Rom. x. 20, 21.
Isa. xxix. 14.		1 Cor. i. 19.
Isa. xl. 13.		1 Cor. 2. 16.
Isa. xxviii. 11, 12.	Comp. Rom. xi. 34.	1 Cor. xiv. 21.
Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8.		1 Pet. i. 24, 25.
Isa. liii. 9.		1 Pet. ii. 22.
Isa. liii. 5.		1 Pet. ii. 24.
Isa. viii. 12, 13.		1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

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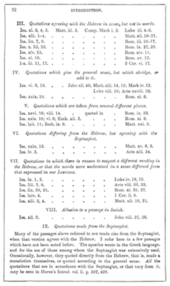

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III. *Quotations agreeing with the Hebrew in sense, but not in words.*

Isa. xl. 3, 4, 5.	Matt. iii. 3. Comp. Mark i. 3.	Luke iii. 4–6.
Isa. xlii. 1–4.		Matt. xii. 18–21.
Isa. lix. 7, 8.		Rom. iii. 15–17.
Isa. x. 22, 23.		Rom. ix. 27, 28.
Isa. xlv. 23.		Rom. xiv. 11.
Isa. xi. 10.		Rom. xv. 12.
Isa. lii. 11, 12.		2 Cor. vi. 17.

IV. *Quotations which give the general sense, but which abridge, or add to it.*

Isa. vi. 9, 10.		John xii. 40; Matt. xiii. 14, 15; Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10; Acts xxviii. 26.
Isa. xxix. 10.		Rom. xi. 8.

V. *Quotations which are taken from several different places.*

Isa. xxvi. 16; viii. 14.	quoted in	Rom. ix. 33.
Isa. xxix. 10; vi. 9; Ezek. xii. 2.		Rom. xi. 8.
Isa. lxii. 11; Zech. ix. 9.		Matt. xxi. 5.

VI. *Quotations differing from the Hebrew, but agreeing with the Septuagint.*

Isa. xxix. 13.	Matt. xv. 8, 9.
Isa. lv. 3.	Acts xiii. 34.

VII. *Quotations in which there is reason to suspect a different reading in the Hebrew, or that the words were understood in a sense different from that expressed in our Lexicons.*

Isa. lx. 1, 2.	Luke iv. 18, 19.
Isa. liii. 7, 8.	Acts viii. 32, 33.
Isa. lix. 20, 21.	Rom. xi. 26, 27.
Isa. lxiv. 4.	1 Cor. ii. 9.
Isa. xlii. 2, 4.	Matt. xii. 18, 21.

VIII. *Allusion to a passage in Isaiah.*

Isa. xii. 3.	John viii. 37, 38.

IX. *Quotations made from the Septuagint.*

Many of the passages above referred to are made also from the Septuagint, when that version agrees with the Hebrew. I refer here to a few passages which have not been noted before. The apostles wrote in the Greek language, and for the use of those among whom the Septuagint was extensively used. Occasionally, however, they quoted directly from the Hebrew, that is, made a *translation* themselves, or quoted according to the general sense. *All* the quotations that are in accordance with the Septuagint, or that vary from it, may be seen in Horne's Introd. vol. ii. p. 387, 428.

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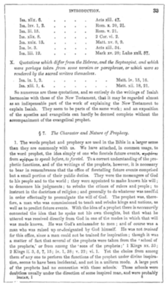

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Isa. xlix. 6.	Acts xiii. 47.
Isa. lxv. 1, 2.	Rom. x. 20, 21.
Isa. lii. 15.	Rom. v. 21.
Isa. xlix. 8.	2 Cor. vi. 2.
Isa. xxix. 13.	Matt. xv. 8, 9.
Isa. lv. 3.	Acts xiii. 34.
Isa. liii. 12.	Mark xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37.

X. *Quotations which differ from the Hebrew, and the Septuagint, and which were perhaps taken from some version or paraphrase, or which were so rendered by the sacred writers themselves.*

Isa. ix. 1, 2.	Matt. iv. 15, 16.
Isa. xlii. 1, 4.	Matt. xii. 18, 21.

So numerous are these quotations, and so entirely do the writings of Isaiah harmonise with those of the New Testament, that it may be regarded almost as an indispensable part of the work of explaining the New Testament to explain Isaiah. They seem to be parts of the same work; and an exposition of the apostles and evangelists can hardly be deemed complete without the accompaniment of the evangelical prophet.

§ 7. *The Character and Nature of Prophecy.*

1. The words prophet and prophecy are used in the Bible in a larger sense than they are commonly with us. We have attached, in common usage, to the word prophet, the idea simply of one who foretels future events, προφήτης from πρόφημι *to speak before, to foretel.* To a correct understanding of the prophetic functions, and of the writings of the prophets, however, it is necessary to bear in remembrance that the office of foretelling future events comprised but a small portion of their public duties. They were the messengers of God to his people and to the world; they were appointed to make known his will; to denounce his judgments; to rebuke the crimes of rulers and people; to instruct in the doctrines of religion; and generally to do whatever was needful in order effectually to promulgate the will of God. The prophet was, therefore, a man who was commissioned to teach and rebuke kings and nations, as well as to predict future events. With the idea of a prophet there is *necessarily* connected the idea that he spoke not his own thoughts, but that what he uttered was received directly from God in one of the modes in which that will was made known. He was God's ambassador to men; and of course was a man who was raised up or designated by God himself. He was not *trained* for this office, since a man could not be trained for inspiration; though it was a matter of fact that several of the prophets were taken from the 'school of the prophets,' or from among the 'sons of the prophets;' 1 Kings xx. 35; 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7, 15; iv. 1, 38; v. 22; vi. 1. Yet the choice from among them of any one to perform the functions of the prophet under divine inspiration, seems to have been incidental, and not in a uniform mode. A large part of the prophets had no connection with these schools. Those schools were doubtless usually under the direction of some inspired man, and were probably

ISAIAH, I 3

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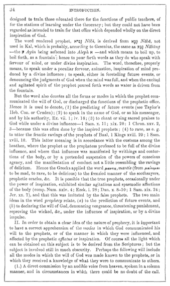

designed to train those educated there for the functions of public teachers, of for the stations of learning under the theocracy; but they could not have been regarded as intended to train for that office which depended wholly on the direct inspiration of God.

The word rendered prophet, נָבִיא *Nâbî*, is derived from נָבָא *Nâbâ*, not used in Kal, which is probably, according to Gesenius, the same as נָבַע *Nâbâng* —the ע *Ayin* being softened into *Aleph* א —and which means to boil up, to boil forth, as a fountain; hence to pour forth words as they do who speak with fervour of mind, or under divine inspiration. The word, therefore, properly means, to speak under a peculiar fervour, animation, inspiration of mind produced by a divine influence; to speak, either in foretelling future events, or denouncing the judgments of God when the mind was full, and when the excited and agitated spirit of the prophet poured forth words as water is driven from the fountain.

But the word also denotes all the forms or modes in which the prophet communicated the will of God, or discharged the functions of the prophetic office. Hence it is used to denote, (1) the predicting of future events (see Taylor's Heb. Con. or Cruden); (2) to speak in the name of God, or as his messenger, and by his authority, Ex. vii. 1; iv. 16; (3) to chant or sing sacred praises to God while under a divine influence—1 Sam. x. 11; xix. 20; 1 Chron. xxv. 2, 3—because this was often done by the inspired prophets; (4) to rave, as e. g. to utter the frantic ravings of the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 29; 1 Sam. xviii. 10. This latter meaning is in accordance with the customs among the heathen, where the prophet or the prophetess professed to be full of the divine influence, and where that influence was manifested by writhings and contortions of the body, or by a pretended suspension of the powers of conscious agency, and the manifestation of conduct not a little resembling the ravings of delirium. Hence the Greeks applied the word μάντις, *mantis* (from μαίνομαι to be mad, to rave, to be delirious) to the frenzied manner of the soothsayers, prophetic oracles, &c. It is possible that the true prophets, occasionally under the power of inspiration, exhibited similar agitations and spasmodic affections of the body (comp. Num. xxiv. 4; Ezek. i. 28; Dan. x. 8–10; 1 Sam. xix. 24; Jer. xx. 7), and that this was imitated by the false prophets. The two main ideas in the word *prophecy* relate, (*a*) to the prediction of future events, and (*b*) to declaring the will of God, denouncing vengeance, threatening punishment, reproving the wicked, &c., under the influence of inspiration, or by a divine impulse.

II. In order to obtain a clear idea of the nature of prophecy, it is important to have a correct apprehension of the *modes* in which God communicated his will to the prophets, or of the manner in which they were influenced, and affected by the prophetic *afflatus* or inspiration. Of course all the light which can be obtained on this subject is to be derived from the Scriptures; but the subject is involved still in much obscurity. Perhaps the following will include all the modes in which the will of God was made known to the prophets, or in which they received a knowledge of what they were to communicate to others.

(1.) A direct commission by an audible voice from heaven, spoken in a solemn manner, and in circumstances in which there could be no doubt of the call.

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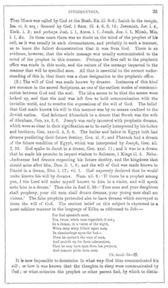

Thus Moses was called by God at the Bush, Ex. iii. 2–6; Isaiah in the temple, Isa. vi. 8, seq.; Samuel by God, 1 Sam. iii. 4, 6, 8, 10; Jeremiah, Jer. i. 4, Ezek. i. 3; and perhaps Joel, i. 1, Amos, i. 1, Jonah, Jon. i. 1, Micah, Mic. i. 1, &c. In these cases there was no doubt on the mind of the prophet of his call, as it was usually in such circumstances, and probably in such a manner, as to leave the fullest demonstration that it was from God. There is no evidence, however, that the whole message was usually communicated to the mind of the prophet in this manner. Perhaps the first call to the prophetic office was made in this mode, and the nature of the message imparted in the manner that will be specified soon. All that is essential to the correct understanding of this is, that there was a clear designation to the prophetic office.

(2.) The will of God was made known by dreams. Instances of this kind are common in the sacred Scriptures, as one of the earliest modes of communication between God and the soul. The idea seems to be that the senses were locked up, and that the soul was left free to hold communication with the invisible world, and to receive the expressions of the will of God. The belief that God made known his will in this manner was by no means confined to the Jewish nation. God informed Abimelech in a dream that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, Gen. xx. 3, 6. Joseph was early favoured with prophetic dreams, which were so clear in their signification as to be easily interpreted by his father and brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 4, 5, 6. The butler and baker in Egypt both had dreams predicting their future destiny, Gen. xl. 5; and Pharaoh had a dream of the future condition of Egypt, which was interpreted by Joseph, Gen. xli. 7, 25. God spake to Jacob in a dream, Gen. xxxi. 11; and it was in a dream that he made his promise to impart wisdom to Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 5. Nebuchadnezzar had dreams respecting his future destiny, and the kingdoms that should arise after him, Dan. ii. 1, 5; and the will of God was made known to Daniel in a dream, Dan. i. 17; vii. 1. God expressly declared that he would make known his will by dreams. Num. xii. 6: 'If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.' Thus also in Joel ii. 28: 'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.' The false prophets pretended also to have dreams which conveyed to them the will of God. The ancient belief on this subject is expressed in a most sublime manner in the language of Elihu as addressed to Job:—

For God speaketh once,
Yea, twice, when man regardeth it not;
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men,
In slumberings upon the bed—
Then he openeth the ears of men,
And sealeth up for them admonition,
That he may turn man from his purpose,
And remove pride from man.
Ch. xxxiii. 14—17.

It is now impossible to determine in what way God thus communicated his will; or how it was known that the thoughts in sleep were communicated by God; or what criterion the prophet or other person had, by which to distin-

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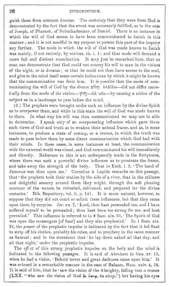

guish these from common dreams. The *certainty* that they were from God is demonstrated by the fact that the event was accurately fulfilled, as in the case of Joseph, of Pharaoh, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Daniel. There is no instance in which the will of God seems to have been communicated to Isaiah in this manner; and it is not needful to my purpose to pursue this part of the inquiry any further. The mode in which the will of God was made known to Isaiah was mainly, if not entirely, by *visions*, ch. i. 1; and that mode will demand a more full and distinct examination. It may just be remarked here, that no man can demonstrate that God *could* not convey his will to man in the visions of the night, or in dreams; or that he could not then have access to the soul, and give to the mind itself some certain indications by which it might be known that the communication was from him. It is possible that the mode of communicating the will of God by the *dream* חֲלוֹם *khălôm*—did not differ *essentially* from the mode of *the vision*—חָזוֹן—*khâzôn*—by causing a *vision* of the subject as in a landscape to pass before the mind.

(3.) The prophets were brought under such an influence by the divine Spirit as to overpower them, and while in this state the will of God was made known to them. In what way his will was *then* communicated we may not be able to determine. I speak only of an overpowering influence which gave them such views of God and truth as to weaken their animal frame, and as, in some instances, to produce a state of *ecstacy*, or a *trance*, in which the truth was made to pass before them by some direct communication which God had with their minds. In these cases, in some instances at least, the communication with the external world was closed, and God communicated his will immediately and directly. Reference to this is not unfrequently made in the Scriptures, where there was such a powerful divine influence as to prostrate the frame, and take away the strength of the body. Thus in Ezek. i. 3, 'The hand of Jehovah was then upon me.' Cornelius à Lapide remarks on this passage, that 'the prophets took their station by the side of a river, that in the stillness and delightful scenery around them they might, through the soft pleasing murmur of the waters, be refreshed, enlivened, and prepared for the divine ecstacies.' Bib. Repository, vol. ii. p. 141. It is more natural, however, to suppose that they did not court or solicit these influences, but that they came upon them by surprise. Jer. xx. 7, 'Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I have suffered myself to be persuaded; thou hast been too strong for me, and hast prevailed.' This influence is referred to in 1 Sam. xix. 20, 'The Spirit of God was upon the messengers [of Saul] and they also prophesied.' In 1 Sam. xix. 24, the *power* of the prophetic impulse is indicated by the fact that it led Saul to strip off his clothes, probably his robes, and to prophesy in the same manner as Samuel; and in the statement that 'he lay down naked all that day, and all that night,' under the prophetic impulse.

The *effect* of this strong prophetic impulse on the body and the mind is indicated in the following passages. It is said of Abraham in Gen. xv. 12, when he had a vision, 'Behold terror and great darkness came upon him.' It was evinced in a remarkable manner in the case of Balaam, Num. xxiv. 4, 16. It is said of him, that he 'saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance* (LXX. "who saw the vision of God ἐν ὕπνῳ, *in sleep*,") but having his eyes

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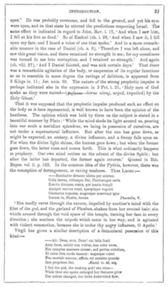

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open.' He was probably overcome, and fell to the ground, and yet his eyes were open, and in that state he uttered the predictions respecting Israel. The same effect is indicated in regard to John, Rev. i. 17, 'And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.' So of Ezekiel (ch. i. 28, 'And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spoke.' And in a more remarkable manner in the case of Daniel (ch. x. 8), 'Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.' And again (ch. viii. 27), 'And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days.' That there was a remarkable agitation of the body, or suspension of its regular functions so as to resemble in some degree the ravings of delirium, is apparent from 2 Kings ix. 11; Jer. xxix. 26. The nature of the strong prophetic impulse is perhaps indicated also in the expression in 2 Pet. i. 21, 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved—(φερόμενοι—*borne along, urged, impelled*) by the Holy Ghost.'

That it was supposed that the prophetic impulse produced such an effect on the body as is here represented, is well known to have been the opinion of the heathens. The opinion which was held by them on the subject is stated in a beautiful manner by Plato: 'While the mind sheds its light around us, pouring into our souls a meridian splendour, we being in possession of ourselves, are not under a supernatural influence. But after the sun has gone down, as might be expected, an ecstasy, a divine influence, and a frenzy falls upon us. For when the divine light shines, the human goes down; but when the former goes down, the latter rises and comes forth. This is what ordinarily happens in prophecy. Our own mind retires on the advent of the divine Spirit; but after the latter has departed, the former again returns.' Quoted in Bib. Repos. vol. ii. p. 163. In the common idea of the Pythia, however, there was the conception of derangement, or raving madness. Thus Lucan:—

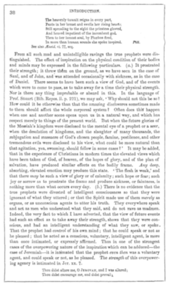
——Bacchatur demens aliena per antrum
Colla ferens, vittasque Dei, Phœbeaque serta
Erectis discussa comis, per inania templi
Ancipiti cervice rotat, spargitque vaganti
Obstantes tripodas, magnoque exaestuat igne
Iratum te, Phœbe, ferens. *Pharsalia*, V.

'She madly raves through the cavern, impelled by another's mind with the fillet of the god, and the garland of Phœbus, shaken from her erected hair: she whirls around through the void space of the temple, turning her face in every direction; she scatters the tripods which come in her way, and is agitated with violent commotion, because she is under thy angry influence, O Apollo.'

Virgil has given a similar description of a demoniacal possession of this kind:—

——Ait: Deus, ecce, Deus! cui talia fanti
Ante fores, subitò non vultus, non color unus,
Nec comptae mansere comae; sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument: majorque videri
Nec mortale sonans; afflata est numine quando
Iam propriore Dei. *Æneid.* vi. 46, seq.

I feel the god, the rushing god! she cries—
While thus she spoke enlarged her features grew
Her colour changed, her locks dishevelled flew.



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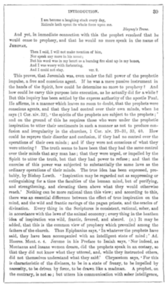
The heavenly tumult reigns in every part,
Pants in her breast and swells her rising heart;
Still spreading to the sight the priestess glowed,
And heaved impatient of the incumbent god.
Then to her inmost soul, by Phœbus fired,
In more than human sounds she spoke inspired. *Pitt.*

See also *Æneid.* vi. 77, seq.

From all such mad and unintelligible ravings the true prophets were distinguished. The effect of inspiration on the physical condition of their bodies and minds may be expressed in the following particulars. (*a.*) It prostrated their strength; it threw them on the ground, as we have seen in the case of Saul, and of John, and was attended occasionally with sickness, as in the case of Daniel. There seems to have been such a view of God, and of the events which were to come to pass, as to take away for a time their physical strength. Nor is there any thing improbable or absurd in this. In the language of Prof. Stuart (Bib. Repos. ii. p. 221), we may ask, 'Why should not this be so? How could it be otherwise than that the amazing disclosures sometimes made to them should affect the whole corporeal system? Often does this happen when one and another scene opens upon us in a natural way, and which has respect merely to things of the present world. But when the future glories of the Messiah's kingdom were disclosed to the mental eye of a prophet or a seer, when the desolation of kingdoms, and the slaughter of many thousands, the subjugation and massacre of God's chosen people, famine, pestilence, and other tremendous evils were disclosed to his view, what could be more natural than that agitation, yea, swooning, should follow in some cases?' It may be added, that in the experience of Christians in modern times the elevated views which have been taken of God, of heaven, of the hopes of glory, and of the plan of salvation, have produced similar effects on the bodily frame. *Any* deep, absorbing, elevated emotion may produce this state. 'The flesh is weak,' and that there may be such a view of glory or of calamity; such hope or fear; such joy or sorrow as to prostrate the frame and produce sickness, or faintness, is nothing more than what occurs every day. (*b.*) There is no evidence that the true prophets were divested of intelligent consciousness so that they were ignorant of what they uttered; or that the Spirit made use of them *merely* as organs, or as unconscious agents to utter his truth. They everywhere speak and act as men who understood what they said, and do not rave as madmen. Indeed, the very fact to which I have adverted, that the view of future events had such an effect as to take away their strength, shows that they were conscious, and had an intelligent understanding of what they saw, or spoke. That the prophet had *control* of his own mind; that he could speak or not as he pleased; that he acted as a conscious, voluntary, intelligent agent, is more than once intimated, or expressly affirmed. Thus in one of the strongest cases of the overpowering nature of the inspiration which can be adduced—the case of Jeremiah—it is intimated that the prophet *even then* was a voluntary agent, and could speak or not, as he pleased. The *strength* of this overpowering agency is intimated in Jer. xx. 7.

Thou didst allure me, O JEHOVAH, and I was allured;
Thou didst encourage me, and didst prevail;



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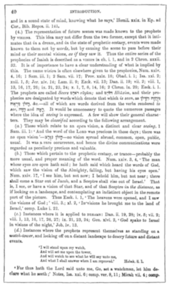
I am become a laughing stock every day,
Ridicule hath spent its whole force upon me.
Blayney's Trans.

And yet, in immediate connection with this the prophet *resolved* that he would cease to prophesy, and that he would no more speak in the name of JEHOVAH.

Then I said, I will not make mention of him,
Nor speak any more in his name;
But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones,
And I was weary with forbearing,
And I could not stay. ver. 9.

This proves, that Jeremiah was, even under the full power of the prophetic impulse, a free and conscious agent. If he was a mere passive instrument in the hands of the Spirit, how could he determine no more to prophesy? And how could he carry this purpose into execution, as he actually did for a while? But this inquiry has been settled by the express authority of the apostle Paul. He affirms, in a manner which leaves no room to doubt, that the prophets were conscious agents, and that they had control over their own minds, when he says (1 Cor. xiv. 32), 'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;' and on the ground of this he requires those who were under the prophetic inspiration to utter their sentiments in such a manner as not to produce confusion and irregularity in the churches, 1 Cor. xiv. 29–31, 33, 40. How could he reprove their disorder and confusion, if they had no control over the operations of their own minds; and if they were not conscious of what they were uttering? The truth seems to have been that they had the same control over their minds that any man has; that they were urged, or impelled by the Spirit to utter the truth, but that they had power to refuse; and that the exercise of this power was subjected to substantially the same laws as the ordinary operations of their minds. The true idea has been expressed, probably, by Bishop Lowth. 'Inspiration may be regarded not as suppressing or extinguishing for a time the faculties of the human mind, but of purifying, and strengthening, and elevating them above what they would otherwise reach.' Nothing can be more rational than this view; and according to this, there was an essential difference between the effect of true inspiration on the mind, and the wild and frantic ravings of the pagan priests, and the oracles of divination. Every thing in the Scriptures is consistent, rational, sober, and in accordance with the laws of the animal economy; every thing in the heathen idea of inspiration was wild, frantic, fevered, and absurd. (*c.*) It may be added, that this is the common view of prophecy which prevailed among the fathers of the church. Thus Epiphanius says, 'In whatever the prophets have said, they have been accompanied with an intelligent state of mind;' Ad. Haeres. Mont. c. 4. Jerome in his Preface to Isaiah says, 'Nor indeed, as Montanus and insane women dream, did the prophets speak in an ecstasy, so that they did not know what they uttered, and, while they instructed others, did not themselves understand what they said.' Chrysostom says, 'For this is characteristic of the diviners, to be in a state of frenzy, to be impelled by necessity, to be driven by force, to be drawn like a madman. A prophet, on the contrary, is not so; but utters his communication with sober intelligence,



and in a sound state of mind, knowing what he says,' Homil. xxix. in Ep. ad Cor., Bib. Repos. ii. 141.

(4.) The representation of future scenes was made known to the prophets by VISIONS. This idea may not differ from the two former, except that it intimates that in a dream, and in the state of prophetic ecstasy, events were made known to them not by *words*, but by causing the scene to pass before their mind or their mental visions, *as if* they saw it. Thus the entire series of the prophecies of Isaiah is described as a VISION in ch. i. 1, and in 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. It is of importance to have a clear understanding of what is implied by this. The name *vision* is often elsewhere given to the prophecies, Num. xxiv. 4, 16; 1 Sam. iii. 1; 2 Sam. vii. 17; Prov. xxix. 18; Obad. i. 1; Isa. xxi. 2; xxii. 1, 5; *Jer.* xiv. 14; Lam. ii. 9; Ezek. vii. 13; Dan. ii. 19; vii. 2; viii. 1, 13, 16, 17, 26; ix. 21, 23, 24; x. 1, 7, 8, 14, 16; 2 Chron. ix. 29; Ezek. i. 1. The prophets are called *Seers* רֹאִים *rôîm;* and חֹזִים *Hhôzim*, and their prophecies are designated by words which denote that which *is seen*, as חָזוֹן חִזָּיוֹן מַרְאֶה, &c.—all of which are words derived from the verbs rendered *to see*, רָאָה and חָזָה. It would be unnecessary to quote the numerous passages where the idea of *seeing* is expressed. A few will show their general characters. They may be *classified* according to the following arrangement.

(*a.*) Those which relate to an *open* vision, a distinct and clear *seeing*, 1 Sam. iii. 1: 'And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision'—חָזוֹן נִפְרָץ—no vision spread abroad, common, open, public, usual. It was a rare occurrence, and hence the divine communications were regarded as peculiarly precious and valuable.

(*b.*) Those which pertain to the prophetic ecstasy, or trance—probably the more usual, and proper meaning of the word. Num. xxiv. 3, 4, 'The man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling, but having his eyes open.' Num. xxiv. 17, 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; there shall come a Star out of *Jacob*, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.' That is, I see, or have a vision of that Star, and of that Sceptre *in the distance*, as if looking on a landscape, and contemplating an indistinct object in the remote part of the picture. Thus Ezek. i. 1, 'The heavens were opened, and I saw the visions of God;' viii. 3.; xl. 2, 'In visions he brought me to the land of Israel,' comp. Luke i. 22.

(*c.*) Instances where it is applied to DREAMS: Dan. ii. 19, 28; iv. 5; vii. 2; viii. 1, 13, 16, 17, 26, 27; ix. 21, 23, 24; Gen. xlvi. 2, 'God spake to Israel in visions of the night,' Job. iv. 13.

(*d.*) Instances where the prophets represent themselves as standing on a *watch-tower*, and looking off on a distant landscape to descry future and distant events.

'I will stand upon my watch,
And will set me upon the tower,
And will watch to see what he will say unto me,
And what I shall answer when I am reproved.' Habak. ii. 1.

'For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth;' Notes, Isa. xxi. 6; comp. ver. 8, 11; Micah vii. 4; comp.

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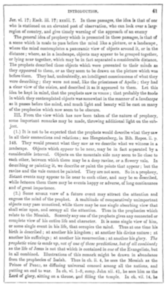

Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. iii. 17; xxxiii. 7. In these passages, the idea is that of one who is stationed on an elevated post of observation, who can look over a large region of country, and give timely warning of the approach of an enemy

The general idea of prophecy which is presented in these passages, is that of a scene which is made to pass before the mind like a picture, or a landscape, where the mind contemplates a panoramic view of objects around it, or in the distance; where, as in a landscape, objects may appear to be grouped together, or lying near together, which may be in fact separated a considerable distance. The prophets described those objects which were presented to their minds as they *appeared* to them, or as they seem to be drawn on the picture which was before them. They had, undoubtedly, an intelligent consciousness of what they were *describing*; they were not mad, like the priestesses of Apollo; they had a clear view of the *vision*, and described it as it appeared to them. Let this idea be kept in mind, that the prophets saw IN VISION; that probably the mode in which they contemplated objects was somewhat in the manner of a *landscape* as it passes before the mind, and much light and beauty will be cast on many of the prophecies which now seem to be obscure.

III. From the view which has now been taken of the nature of prophecy, some important remarks may be made, throwing additional light on the subject.

(1.) It is not to be expected that the prophets would describe what they saw in all their connections and relations; see Hengstenberg, in Bib. Repos. ii. p. 148. They would present what they saw as we describe what we witness in a landscape. Objects which *appear* to be near, may be in fact separated by a considerable interval. Objects on the mountain side may seem to lie close to each other, between which there may be a deep ravine, or a flowery vale. In describing or painting it, we describe or paint the points that appear; but the ravine and the vale cannot be painted. They are not seen. So in a prophecy, distant events may appear to lie near to each other, and may be so described, while *between* them there may be events happy or adverse, of long continuance and of great importance.

(2.) Some SINGLE VIEW of a future event may attract the attention and engross the mind of the prophet. A multitude of comparatively unimportant objects may pass unnoticed, while there may be one single absorbing view that shall seize upon, and occupy all the attention. Thus in the prophecies which relate to the Messiah. Scarcely any one of the prophets gives any connected or complete view of his entire life and character. It is some single view of him, or some single event in his life, that occupies the mind. Thus at one time his birth is described; at another his kingdom; at another his divine nature; at another his sufferings; at another his resurrection; at another his glory. *The prophetic view is made up, not of one of these predictions, but of all combined;* as the life of Jesus is not that which is contained in *one* of the Evangelists, but in all combined. Illustrations of this remark might be drawn in abundance from the prophecies of Isaiah. Thus in ch. ii. 4, he sees the Messiah as the Prince of Peace, as diffusing universal concord among all the nations, and putting an end to war. In ch. vi. 1–5, comp. John xii. 41, he sees him as the Lord of glory, sitting on a throne, and filling the temple. In ch. vii. 14, he

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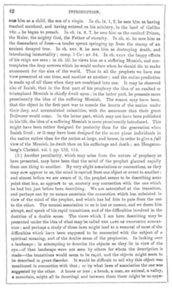

sees him as a child, the son of a virgin. In ch. ix. 1, 2, he sees him as having reached manhood, and having entered on his ministry, in the land of Galilee where he began to preach. In ch. ix. 6, 7, he sees him as the exalted Prince, the Ruler, the mighty God, the Father of eternity. In ch. xi. he sees him as the descendant of *Jesse*—a tender sprout springing up from the stump of an ancient decayed tree. In ch. xxv. 8, he sees him as destroying death, and introducing immortality; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 54. In ch. xxxv. the happy effects of his reign are seen; in ch. liii. he views him as a suffering Messiah, and contemplates the deep sorrows which he would endure when he should die to make atonement for the sins of the world. Thus in all the prophets we have one view presented at one time, and another at another; and the entire prediction is made up of *all* these when they are combined into one. It may be observed also of Isaiah, that in the first part of his prophecy the idea of an exalted or triumphant Messiah is chiefly dwelt upon; in the latter part, he presents more prominently the idea of the suffering Messiah. The reason may have been, that the object in the first part was to console the hearts of the nation under their deep and accumulated calamities, with the assurance that their great Deliverer would come. In the latter part, which may not have been published in his life, the idea of a suffering Messiah is more prominently introduced. This might have been rather designed for posterity than for the generation when Isaiah lived; or it may have been designed for the more pious individuals in the nation rather than for the nation at large, and hence, in order to give a *full* view of the Messiah, he dwelt then on his sufferings and death; see Hengstenberg's Christol. vol. i. pp. 153, 154.

(3.) Another peculiarity, which may arise from the nature of prophecy as here presented, may have been that the mind of the prophet glanced rapidly from one thing to another. By very slight associations or connections, as they may now appear to us, the mind is carried from one object or event to another; and almost before we are aware of it, the prophet seems to be describing some point that has, as appears to us, scarcely *any* connection with the one which he had but just before been describing. We are astonished at the transition, and perhaps can by no means ascertain the *connection* which has subsisted in view of the mind of the prophet, and which has led him to pass from the one to the other. The mental association to us is lost or unseen, and we deem him abrupt, and speak of his rapid transitions, and of the difficulties involved in the doctrine of a double sense. The views which I am here describing may be presented under the idea of what may be called THE LAWS OF PROPHETIC SUGGESTION; and perhaps a study of those laws might lead to a removal of most of the difficulties which have been supposed to be connected with the subject of a spiritual meaning, and of the double sense of the prophecies. In looking over a landscape; in attempting to describe the objects as they lie in view of the eye—if that landscape were not seen by others for whom the description is made—the transitions would seem to be rapid, and the objects might seem to be described in great disorder. It would be difficult to tell why this object was mentioned in connection with that; or by what laws of association the one was suggested by the other. A house or tree; a brook, a man, an animal, a valley, a mountain, might all be described, and between them there might be no appa-

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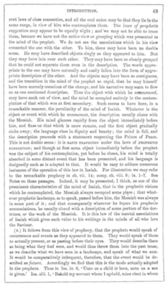

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rent laws of close connection, and all the real union may be that they lie in the same range, in view of him who contemplates them. The *laws of prophetic suggestion* may appear to be equally slight; and we may not be able to trace them, because we have not the entire view or grouping which was presented to the mind of the prophet. We do not see the associations which in his view connected the one with the other. To him, there may have been no double sense. He may have described objects singly as they appeared to him. But they may have lain near each other. They may have been so closely grouped that he could not separate them even in the description. The words appropriate to the one may have naturally and easily fallen into the form of appropriate description of the other. And the objects may have been so contiguous, and the transition in the mind of the prophet so rapid, that he may himself have been scarcely conscious of the change, and his narrative may seem to flow on as one continued description. Thus the object with which he commenced, may have sunk out of view, and the mind be occupied entirely in the contemplation of that which was at first secondary. Such seems to have been, in a remarkable manner, the peculiarity of the mind of Isaiah. Whatever is the object or event with which he *commences*, the description usually *closes* with the Messiah. His mind glances rapidly from the object immediately before him, and fixes on that which is more remote, and the first object gradually sinks away; the language rises in dignity and beauty; the mind is full, and the description proceeds with a statement respecting the Prince of Peace. This is not double sense: it is RAPID TRANSITION under the laws of PROPHETIC SUGGESTION; and though at first some object immediately before the prophet was the subject of his contemplation, yet before he closes, his mind is totally absorbed in some distant event that has been presented, and his language is designedly such as is adapted to that. It would be easy to adduce numerous instances of the operation of this law in Isaiah. For illustration we may refer to the remarkable prophecy in ch. vii. 14; comp. ch. viii. 8; ix. 1–7. See Notes on those passages. Indeed, it may be presented, I think, as one of the prominent characteristics of the mind of Isaiah, that in the prophetic visions which he contemplated, the Messiah always occupied some place; that whatever prophetic landscape, so to speak, passed before him, the Messiah was always in some part of it; and that consequently wherever he *began* his prophetic annunciations, he usually *closed* with a description of some portion of the doctrines, or the work of the Messiah. It is this law of the mental associations of Isaiah which gives such value to his writings in the minds of all who love the Saviour.

(4.) It follows from this view of prophecy, that the prophets would speak of occurrences and events as they appeared to them. They would speak of them as actually present, or as passing before their eyes. They would describe them as being what they *had* seen, and would thus throw them into the past tense, as we describe what we have seen in a landscape, and speak of what we *saw*. It would be comparatively infrequent, therefore, that the event would be described as *future*. Accordingly we find that this is the mode actually adopted in the prophets. Thus in Isa. ix. 6, 'Unto us a child *is* born, unto us a son *is* given.' Isa. xlii. 1, 'Behold my servant whom I *uphold*, mine elect in whom

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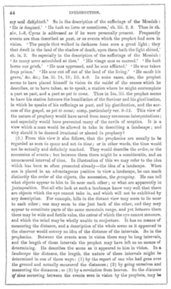

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my soul *delighteth*.' So in the description of the sufferings of the Messiah: 'He *is* despised.' 'He *hath* no form or comeliness,' ch. liii. 2, 3. Thus in ch. xlv. 1–8, Cyrus is addressed as if he were personally present. Frequently events are thus described as *past*, or as events which the prophet *had seen* in vision. '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,' ch. ix. 2. So especially in the description of the sufferings of the Messiah: 'As many *were* astonished at thee.' 'His visage *was* so marred.' 'He *hath* borne our griefs.' 'He *was* oppressed, and he *was* afflicted.' 'He *was* taken from prison.' '*He was* cut off out of the land of the living.' '*He made* his grave,' &c. &c.; Isa. lii. 14, 15; liii. 4–9. In some cases, also, the prophet seems to have placed himself in vision *in the midst* of the scenes which he describes, or to have taken, so to speak, a station where he might contemplate a part as past, and a part as *yet to come*. Thus in Isa. liii. the prophet seems to have his station *between* the humiliation of the Saviour and his glorification, in which he speaks of his sufferings as *past*, and his glorification, and the success of the gospel, *as yet to come;* comp. particularly ver. 9–12. This view of the nature of prophecy would have saved from many erroneous interpretations; and especially would have prevented many of the cavils of sceptics. It is a view which a man would be allowed to take in describing a landscape; and why should it be deemed irrational or absurd in prophecy?

(5.) From this view it also follows, that the prophecies are usually to be regarded as seen *in space* and not *in time;* or in other words, the time would not be actually and definitely marked. They would describe the *order*, or the succession of events; but between them there might be a considerable, and an unmeasured interval of time. In illustration of this we may refer to the idea which has been so often presented already—the idea of a landscape. When one is placed in an advantageous position to view a landscape, he can mark distinctly the *order of* the objects, the succession, the *grouping*. He can tell what objects appear to him to lie *near* each other; or what are apparently in juxtaposition. But all who look at such a landscape know very well that there are objects which the eye cannot take in, and which will not be exhibited by any description. For example, hills in the distant view may seem to lie *near* to each other; one may seem to rise just back of the other, and they may appear to constitute parts of the same mountain range, and yet *between* them there may be wide and fertile vales, the *extent of* which the eye cannot measure, and which the mind may be wholly unable to conjecture. It has no means of measuring the distance, and a description of the whole scene as it *appeared* to the observer would convey no idea of the distance of the intervals. So in the prophecies. Between the events seen in vision there may be long intervals, and the length of those intervals the prophet may have left us no means of determining. He describes the scene as it appeared to him in vision. In a *landscape* the distance, the length, the nature of these intervals might be determined in one of three ways: (1) by the report of one who had gone over the ground and actually *measured* the distances; (2) by going ourselves and measuring the distances; or (3) by a revelation from heaven. So the *distance of time* occurring between the events seen in vision by the prophets, may be

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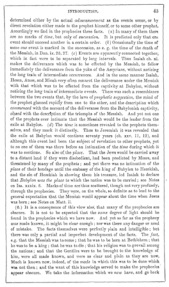

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determined either by the actual *admeasurement* as the events occur, or by direct revelation either made to the prophet himself, or to some other prophet. Accordingly we find in the prophecies these facts. (*a*) In many of them there are no marks of *time*, but only of *succession*. It is predicted only that one event should succeed another in a certain order. (*b*) Occasionally the time of some *one* event is marked in the succession, as *e*. g. the time of the death of the Messiah, in Dan. ix. 26, 27. (*c*) Events are apparently connected together, which in fact were to be separated by long intervals. Thus Isaiah ch. xi. makes the deliverance which was to be effected by the Messiah, to follow immediately the deliverance from the yoke of the Assyrians, without noticing the long train of intermediate occurrences. And in the same manner Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah very often connect the deliverance under the Messiah with that which was to be effected from the captivity at Babylon, without noticing the long train of intermediate events. There was such a resemblance between the two events that, by the laws of *prophetic suggestion*, the mind of the prophet glanced *rapidly* from one to the other, and the description which *commenced* with the account of the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, *closed* with the description of the triumphs of the Messiah. And yet not one of the prophets ever intimate that the Messiah would be the leader from the exile at Babylon. (*d*) The *time* is sometimes revealed to the prophets themselves, and they mark it distinctly. Thus to Jeremiah it was revealed that the exile at Babylon would continue seventy years (ch. xxv. 11, 12), and although this event had been the subject of revelation to other prophets, yet to no one of them was there before an intimation of the *time during* which it was to continue. So also of the *place*. That the Jews would be carried away to a distant land if they were disobedient, had been predicted by Moses, and threatened by many of the prophets; and yet there was no intimation of the *place of* their bondage until the embassy of the king of Babylon to Hezekiah, and the sin of Hezekiah in showing them his treasure, led Isaiah to declare that *Babylon was the place to* which the nation was to be carried; see Notes on Isa. xxxix. 6. Marks of time are thus scattered, though not very profusely, through the prophecies. They were, on the whole, so definite as to lead to the general expectation that the Messiah would appear about the time when Jesus was born; see Notes on Matt. ii.

(6.) It is a consequence of this view also, that many of the prophecies are obscure. It is not to be expected that the *same* degree of light should be found in the prophecies which we have now. And yet so far as the prophecy *was* made known, it might be clear enough; nor was there any danger or need of mistake. The facts themselves were perfectly plain and intelligible; but there was only a partial and imperfect development of the facts. The *fact*, e.g. that the Messiah was to come; that he was to be born at Bethlehem; that he was to be a king; that he was to die; that his religion was to prevail among the nations; and that the Gentiles were to be brought to the knowledge of him, were all made known, and were as clear and plain as they are now. Much is known now, indeed, of the *mode* in which this was to be done which was not then; and the want of this knowledge served to make the prophecies appear obscure. We take the information which we *now* have, and go back

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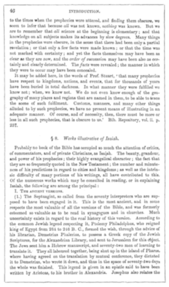

to the times when the prophecies were uttered, and finding them obscure, we seem to infer that because *all* was not known, *nothing* was known. But we are to remember that *all* science at the beginning is elementary; and that knowledge on all subjects makes its advances by slow degrees. Many things in the prophecies were obscure, in the sense that there had been only a partial revelation; or that only a few facts were made known; or that the time was not marked with certainty; and yet the facts themselves may have been as clear as they are *now*, and the *order of succession* may have been also as certainly and clearly determined. The *facts* were revealed; the manner in which they were to occur may have been concealed.

It may be added here, in the words of Prof. Stuart, 'that many prophecies have respect to kingdoms, nations, and events, that for thousands of years have been buried in total darkness. In what manner they were fulfilled we know not; when, we know not. We do not even know enough of the geography of many places and regions that are named in them, to be able to trace the scene of such fulfilment. Customs, manners, and many other things alluded to by such prophecies, we have no present means of illustrating in an adequate manner. Of course, and of necessity, then, there must be more or less in all such prophecies, that is obscure to us.' Bib. Repository, vol. ii. p. 237.

§ 8. *Works illustrative of Isaiah.*

Probably no book of the Bible has occupied so much the attention of critics, of commentators, and of private Christians, as Isaiah. The beauty, grandeur, and power of his prophecies; their highly evangelical character; the fact that they are so frequently quoted in the New Testament; the number and minuteness of his predictions in regard to cities and kingdoms; as well as the intrinsic difficulty of many portions of his writings, all have contributed to this. Of the numerous works which may be consulted in reading, or in explaining Isaiah, the following are among the principal:

I. THE ANCIENT VERSIONS.

(1.) The Septuagint, so called from the seventy interpreters who are supposed to have been engaged in it. This is the most ancient, and in some respects the most valuable of all the versions of the Bible, and was formerly esteemed so valuable as to be read in synagogues and in churches. Much uncertainty exists in regard to the *real* history of this version. According to the common Jewish legend respecting it, Ptolemy Philadelphus, who reigned king of Egypt from 284 to 246 B. C., formed the wish, through the advice of his librarian, Demetrius Phalerius, to possess a Greek copy of the Jewish Scriptures, for the Alexandrian Library, and sent to Jerusalem for this object. The Jews sent him a Hebrew manuscript, and seventy-two men of learning to translate it. They all laboured together, being shut up in the island of Pharos, where having agreed on the translation by mutual conference, they dictated it to Demetrius, who wrote it down, and thus in the space of seventy-two days the whole was finished. This legend is given in an epistle said to have been written by Aristeas, to his brother in Alexandria. Josephus also relates the

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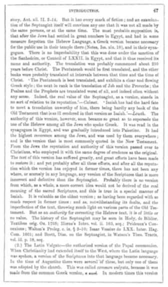

story, Ant. xii. II. 2-14. But it has every mark of fiction; and an examination of the Septuagint itself will convince any one that it was not all made by the same persons, or at the same time. The most probable supposition is, that after the Jews had settled in great numbers in Egypt, and had in some measure forgotten the Hebrew Language, a Greek version became necessary for the public use in their temple there (Notes, Isa. xix. 18), and in their synagogues. There is no improbability that this was done under the sanction of the Sanhedrim, or Council of LXXII. in Egypt, and that it thus received its name and authority. The translation was probably commenced about 250 years before Christ. The Pentateuch would be first translated, and the other books were probably translated at intervals between that time and the time of Christ. 'The Pentateuch is best translated, and exhibits a clear and flowing Greek style; the next in rank is the translation of Job and the Proverbs; the Psalms and the Prophets are translated worst of all, and indeed often without any sense. Indeed, the real value of the Septuagint, as a version, stands in no sort of relation to its reputation.'—*Calmet.* 'Isaiah has had the hard fate to meet a translation unworthy of him, there being hardly any book of the Old Testament that is so ill rendered in that version as Isaiah.'—*Louth.* The authority of this version, however, soon became so great as to supersede the use of the Hebrew among all the Jews who spoke Greek. It was read in the synagogues in Egypt, and was gradually introduced into Palestine. It had the highest reverence among the Jews, and was used by them everywhere; and is the version that is most commonly quoted in the New Testament. From the Jews the reputation and authority of this version passed over to Christians, who employed it with the same degree of credence as the original. The *text* of this version has suffered greatly, and great efforts have been made to restore it; and yet probably after all these efforts, and after all the reputation which the version has enjoyed in former times, there has not been any where, or scarcely in any language, any version of the Scriptures that is more incorrect and defective than the Septuagint. Probably there is no version from which, as a whole, a more correct idea would not be derived of the real meaning of the sacred Scriptures, and this is true in a special manner of Isaiah. It is valuable as the oldest version; as having been regarded with so much respect in former times: and as, notwithstanding its faults, and the imperfection of the text, throwing much light on various parts of the Old Testament. But as an *authority* for correcting the Hebrew text, it is of little or no value. The history of the Septuagint may be seen in Hody, de Bibliar. Textibus orig. Ox. 1705; Horne's Intro. vol. ii. 163, seq.; Prideaux's Connexions; Walton's Proleg. c. ix. § 3-10; Isaac Vossius de LXX. Inter. Hag. Com. 1661; and Brett, Diss. on the Septuagint, in Watson's Theo. Tracts, vol. iii. p. 18, seq.

(2.) The Latin Vulgate—the authorized version of the Papal communion. When Christianity had extended itself to the West, where the Latin language was spoken, a version of the Scriptures into that language became necessary. In the time of Augustine there were several of these, but only one of them was adopted by the church. This was called *common vulgata*, because it was made from the common Greek version, ἡ κοινή. In modern times this version

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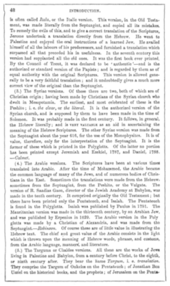

is often called *Itala*, or the Italic version. This version, in the Old Testament, was made literally from the Septuagint, and copied all its mistakes. To remedy the evils of this, and to give a correct translation of the Scriptures, Jerome undertook a translation directly from the Hebrew. He went to Palestine and enjoyed the oral instructions of a learned Jew. He availed himself of all the labours of his predecessors, and furnished a translation which surpassed all that preceded his in usefulness. In the seventh century this version had supplanted all the old ones. It was the first book ever printed. By the Council of Trent, it was declared to be 'authentic'—and is the authorized or standard version of the Papists; and is regarded by them as of equal authority with the original Scriptures. This version is allowed generally to be a very faithful translation; and it undoubtedly gives a much more correct view of the original than the Septuagint.

(3.) The Syriac versions. Of these there are two, both of which are of Christian origin; having been made by Christians of the Syrian church who dwelt in Mesopotamia. The earliest, and most celebrated of these is the Peshito; i. e. *the clear*, or *the literal*. It is the authorized version of the Syrian church, and is supposed by them to have been made in the time of Solomon. It was probably made in the first century. It follows, in general, the Hebrew literally; and is VERY VALUABLE as an aid in ascertaining the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures. The other Syriac version was made from the Septuagint about the year 616, for the use of the Monophysites. It is of value, therefore, only for the interpretation of the Septuagint. It is the *former* of these which is printed in the Polyglotts. Of the latter no portion has been printed except Jeremiah and Ezekiel, 1787, and Daniel, 1788. —*Calmet.*

(4.) The Arabic versions. The Scriptures have been at various times translated into Arabic. After the time of Mohammed, the Arabic became the common language of many of the Jews, and of numerous bodies of Christians in the East. Sometimes the translations were made from the Hebrew, sometimes from the Septuagint, from the Peshito, or the Vulgate. The version of R. Saadias Gaon, director of the Jewish Academy at Babylon, was made in the tenth century. It comprised originally the Old Testament; but there have been printed only the Pentateuch, and Isaiah. The Pentateuch is found in the Polyglotts. Isaiah was published by Paulus in 1791. The Mauritanian version was made in the thirteenth century, by an Arabian Jew, and was published by Erpenius in 1629. The Arabic version in the Polyglotts was made by a Christian of Alexandria, and was made from the Septuagint.—*Robinson.* Of course these are of little value in illustrating the Hebrew text. The chief and great value of the Arabic consists in the light which is thrown upon the meaning of Hebrew words, phrases, and customs, from the Arabic language, manners, and literature.

(5.) The Targums or Chaldee versions. All these are the works of Jews living in Palestine and Babylon, from a century before Christ, to the eighth, or ninth century after. They bear the name *Targum*, i. e. *translation*. They comprise the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch; of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the historical books, and the prophets; of Jerusalem on the Penta-

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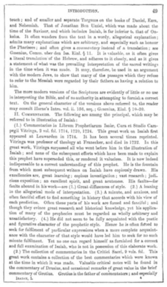

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teuch ; and of smaller and separate Targums on the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. That of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, which was made about the time of the Saviour, and which includes Isaiah, is far inferior to that of Onkelos. It often wanders from the text in a wordy, allegorical explanation; admits many explanations which are arbitrary, and especially such as honour the Pharisees ; and often gives a *commentary instead of a translation* ; see Gesenius, Comm. uber den Isa. Einl. § 11. It is valuable, as it often gives a literal translation of the Hebrew, and adheres to it closely, and as it gives a statement of what was the prevailing interpretation of the sacred writings in the time when it was made. It may, therefore, be used in an argument with the modern Jews, to show that many of the passages which they refuse to refer to the Messiah were regarded by their fathers as having a relation to him.

The more modern versions of the Scriptures are evidently of little or no use in interpreting the Bible, and of no authority in attempting to furnish a correct text. On the general character of the versions above referred to, the reader may consult Horne's Intro. vol. ii. 156, seq. ; Gesenius, Einl. § 10–20.

II. COMMENTARIES. The following are among the principal, which may be referred to in illustration of Isaiah :

(1.) Commentarius in Librum Prophetiarum Isaiæ, Cura et Studio Campegii Vitringa, 2 vol. fol. 1714, 1720, 1724. This great work on Isaiah first appeared at Leuwarden in 1714. It has been several times reprinted. Vitringa was professor of theology at Franecker, and died in 1722. In this great work, Vitringa surpassed all who went before him in the illustration of Isaiah ; and none of the subsequent efforts which have been made to explain this prophet have superseded this, or rendered it valueless. It is now indeed indispensable to a correct understanding of this prophet. He is the fountain from which most subsequent writers on Isaiah have copiously drawn. His excellencies are, great learning ; copious investigation ; vast research ; judicious exposition ; an excellent spirit, and great acuteness. His faults—for faults abound in his work—are (1.) Great diffuseness of style. (2.) A leaning to the allegorical mode of interpretation. (3.) A minute, and anxious, and often fanciful effort to find something in history that accords with his view of each prediction. Often these parts of his work are forced and fanciful ; and though they evince great research and historical knowledge, yet his application of many of the prophecies must be regarded as wholly arbitrary and unsatisfactory. (4.) He did not seem to be fully acquainted with the poetic and figurative character of the prophetic style. Hence he is often forced to seek for fulfilment of particular expressions when a more complete acquaintance with the character of that style would have led him to seek for no such minute fulfilment. Yet no one can regard himself as furnished for a correct and full examination of Isaiah, who is not in possession of this elaborate work.

(2.) The collection of commentaries in the Critici Sacri, 9 vols. fol. This great work contains a collection of the best commentaries which were known at the time in which it was made. Valuable critical notes will be found in the commentary of Drusius, and occasional remarks of great value in the brief commentary of Grotius. Grotius is the father of commentators ; and especially

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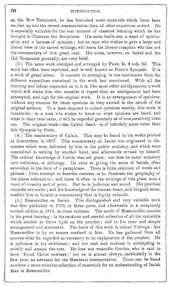

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on the New Testament, he has furnished more *materials* which have been worked up into the recent commentaries, than all *other* expositors united. He is especially valuable for the vast amount of classical learning which he has brought to illustrate the Scriptures. His main faults are, a want of spirituality, and a laxness of opinions ; but no man who wishes to gain a large and liberal view of the sacred writings, will deem his library complete who has not the commentary of this great man. His notes, however, on Isaiah and the Old Testament generally, are very brief.

(3.) The same work abridged and arranged by Poole, in 5 vols. fol. This work has often been reprinted, and is well known as Poole's Synopsis. It is a work of great labour. It consists in arranging in one continuous form the different expositions contained in the work last mentioned. With all the learning and labour expended on it, it is, like most other abridgements, a work which will make him who consults it regret that an abridgement had been attempted, and sigh for the original work. It is an arrangement of *opinions*, without any *reasons* for those opinions as they existed in the minds of the original authors. To a man disposed to collect *opinions* merely, this work is invaluable ; to a man who wishes to know on what opinions are based, and what is their true value, it will be regarded generally as of comparatively little use. The original work—the Critici Sacri—is of infinitely more value than this Synopsis by Poole.

(4.) The commentary of Calvin. This may be found in his works printed at Amsterdam in 1667. This commentary on Isaiah was originated in discourses which were delivered by him in his public ministry, and which were committed to writing by another hand, and afterwards revised by himself. The critical knowledge of Calvin was not great ; nor does he enter minutely into criticisms, or philology. He aims at giving the sense of Isaiah, often somewhat in the form of a paraphrase. There is little criticism of words and phrases ; little attempt to describe customs, or to illustrate the geography of the places referred to ; and there is often in the writings of this great man a want of vivacity and of point. But he is judicious and sound. His practical remarks are useful ; and his knowledge of the human heart, and his good sense, enabled him to furnish a commentary that is highly valuable.

(5.) Rosenmüller on Isaiah. This distinguished and very valuable work was first published in 1793, in three parts, and afterwards in a completely revised edition in 1810, in three volumes. The merit of Rosenmüller consists in his great learning ; in his cautious and careful collection of all the materials which existed to throw light on the prophet ; and in his clear and simple arrangement and statement. The *basis* of this work is indeed Vitringa ; but Rosenmüller is by no means confined to him. He has gathered from all sources what he regarded as necessary to an explanation of the prophet. He is judicious in his criticisms ; and not rash and reckless in attempting to modify and amend the text. He does not resemble Grotius, who is said to have 'found Christ nowhere ;' but he is almost always, particularly in the first part, an advocate for the Messianic interpretation. There can be found nowhere a more valuable collection of *materials* for an understanding of Isaiah than in Rosenmüller.

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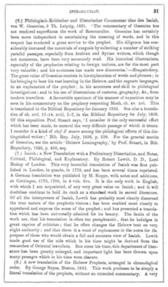

INTRODUCTION. 51

(6.) Philologisch-Kritischer und Historischer Commentar über den Isaiah, von W. Gesenius, 3 Th. Leipzig, 1821. 'The commentary of Gesenius has not rendered superfluous the work of Rosenmüller. Gesenius has certainly been more independent in ascertaining the meaning of words, and in this respect has rendered a great service to the prophet. His diligence has considerably increased the materials of exegesis by collecting a number of striking parallel passages, especially from Arabian and Syrian writers, which though not numerous, have been very accurately read. His historical illustrations, especially of the prophecies relating to foreign nations, are for the most part very valuable ; and his acuteness has made new discoveries.'—*Hengstenberg.* The great value of Gesenius consists in his explanation of words and phrases ; in his bringing to bear his vast learning in the Hebrew, and the cognate languages, to an explanation of the prophet ; in his acuteness and skill in philological investigations ; and in his use of illustrations of customs, geography, &c., from modern travellers. A favourable specimen of his manner of exposition may be seen in his commentary on the prophecy respecting Moab, ch. xv. xvi. This is translated in the Biblical Repository for January 1836. See also a translation of ch. xvii. 12–14. xviii. 1–7, in the Biblical Repository for July, 1836. Of this exposition Prof. Stuart says, 'I consider it the only successful effort which has been made, to unravel the very difficult passage of which it treats. I consider it a kind of *chef d' œuvre* among the philological efforts of this distinguished writer ;' Bib. Rep. July, 1836, p. 220. For the general merits of Gesenius, see the article 'Hebrew Lexicography,' by Prof. Stuart, in Bib. Repository, 1836, p. 468, seq.

(7.) Isaiah ; a New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory. By Robert Lowth, D. D., Lord Bishop of London. This very beautiful translation of Isaiah was first published in London, in quarto, in 1778, and has been several times reprinted. A German translation was published by M. Koppe, with notes and additions, at Göttingen, 1779, 1780, in 4 vols. 8vo. It is the *only* work in English, with which I am acquainted, of any very great value on Isaiah ; and it will doubtless continue to hold its rank as a standard work in sacred literature. Of all the interpreters of Isaiah, Lowth has probably most clearly discerned the true nature of the prophetic visions ; has been enabled most clearly to apprehend and express the sense of the prophet ; and has presented a translation which has been universally admired for its beauty. The faults of the work are, that his translation is often too paraphrastic, that he indulges in great caprice of criticism ; that he often changes the Hebrew text on very slight authority ; and that there is a want of copiousness in the notes for the purpose of those who would obtain a full and accurate view of Isaiah. Lowth made good use of the aids which in his time might be derived from the researches of Oriental travellers. But since his time, this department of literature has been greatly enlarged, and important light has been thrown upon many passages which in his time were obscure.

(8.) A new translation of the Hebrew Prophets, arranged in chronological order. By George Noyes, Boston, 1833. This work professes to be simply a literal translation of the prophets, without an extended commentary. A very

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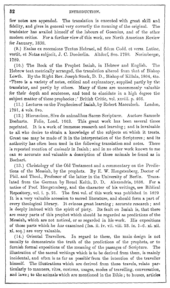

few notes are appended. The translation is executed with great skill and fidelity, and gives in general very correctly the meaning of the original. The translator has availed himself of the labours of Gesenius, and of the other modern critics. For a further view of this work, see North American Review for January, 1838.

(9.) Esaias ex recensione Textus Hebraei, ad fidem Codd. et verss. Latine, vertit, et Notas subjecit, J. C. Doederlin. Altdorf, 8vo. 1789. Norimbergæ, 1789.

(10.) The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, in Hebrew and English. The Hebrew text metrically arranged, the translation altered from that of Bishop Lowth. By the Right Rev. Joseph Stock, D. D., Bishop of Killala, 1804, 4to. 'There is a variety of notes, critical and explanatory, supplied partly by the translator, and partly by others. Many of these are uncommonly valuable for their depth and acuteness, and tend to elucidate in a high degree the subject matter of these prophecies;' British Critic, vol. xxviii. p. 466.

(11.) Lectures on the Prophecies of Isaiah, by Robert Macculoch. London, 1791, 4 vols. 8vo.

(12.) Hierozoicon, Sive de animalibus Sacræ Scripturæ. Auctore Samuele Bocharto. Folio, Lond. 1663. This great work has been several times reprinted. It is a work of immense research and learning; and is invaluable to all who desire to obtain a knowledge of the subjects on which it treats. Great use may be made of it in the interpretation of the Scriptures; and its authority has often been used in the following translation and notes. There is repeated mention of *animals* in Isaiah; and in no other work known to me can so accurate and valuable a description of those animals be found as in Bochart.

(13.) Christology of the Old Testament and a commentary on the Predictions of the Messiah, by the prophets. By E. W. Hengstenberg, Doctor of Phil. and Theol., Professor of the latter in the University of Berlin. Translated from the German by Reuel Keith, D. D. Alexandria, 1836. For a notice of Prof. Hengstenberg, and the character of his writings, see Biblical Repository, vol. i. p. 21. The first vol. of this work was published in 1829. It is a very valuable accession to sacred literature, and should form a part of every theological library. It evinces great learning; accurate research; and is deeply imbued with the spirit of piety. Its fault on Isaiah is, that there are many parts of this prophet which should be regarded as predictions of the Messiah, which are not noticed, or so regarded in his work. His expositions of those parts which he *has* examined (Isa. ii. iv. vii. viii. 23. ix. 1–6. xi. xii. xl. seq.) are very valuable.

(14.) Oriental Travellers. In regard to these, the main design is not usually to demonstrate the truth of the predictions of the prophets, or to furnish formal expositions of the meaning of the passages of Scripture. The illustration of the sacred writings which is to be derived from them, is mainly incidental, and often is as far as possible from the intention of the traveller himself. The illustrations which are derived from these travels, relate particularly to manners, rites, customs, usages, modes of travelling, conversation, and laws; to the animals which are mentioned in the Bible; to houses, articles

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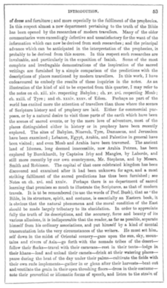

of dress and furniture; and more especially to the *fulfilment* of the prophecies. In this respect almost a new department pertaining to the truth of the Bible has been opened by the researches of modern travellers. Many of the older commentaries were exceedingly defective and unsatisfactory for the want of the information which can now be derived from such researches; and the principal advance which can be anticipated in the interpretation of the prophecies, is probably to be derived from this source. In this respect such researches are invaluable, and particularly in the exposition of Isaiah. Some of the most complete and irrefragable demonstrations of the inspiration of the sacred writings are furnished by a simple comparison of the predictions with the descriptions of places mentioned by modern travellers. In this work, I have endeavoured to embody the results of these inquiries in the notes. As an illustration of the kind of aid to be expected from this quarter, I may refer to the notes on ch. xiii. xiv. respecting Babylon; ch. xv. xvi. respecting Moab; ch. xxiii. of Tyre; and ch. xxxiv. xxxv. of Edom. Perhaps no part of the world has excited more the attention of travellers than those where the scenes of Scripture history and of prophecy are laid. Either for commercial purposes, or by a natural desire to visit those parts of the earth which have been the scenes of sacred events, or by the mere love of adventure, most of the places distinguished either in history or in prophecy have been recently explored. The sites of Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Damascus, and Jerusalem have been examined; Lebanon, Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine in general have been visited; and even Moab and Arabia have been traversed. The ancient land of Idumea, long deemed inaccessible, now Arabia Petræa, has been explored by Burckhardt, by Captains *Irby* and Mangles, by Laborde, and still more recently by our own countrymen, Mr. Stephens, and by Messrs. Smith and Robinson. The capital of that once celebrated kingdom has been discovered and examined after it had been unknown for ages, and a most striking fulfilment of the sacred predictions has thus been furnished; see Notes on ch. xvi. and xxxiv. Perhaps there is no department of sacred learning that promises so much to illustrate the Scriptures, as that of modern travels. It is to be remembered (to use the words of Prof. Bush), that as 'the Bible, in its structure, spirit, and costume, is essentially an Eastern book, it is obvious that the natural phenomena and the moral condition of the East should be made largely tributary to its elucidation. In order to appreciate fully the truth of its descriptions, and the accuracy, force and beauty of its various allusions, it is indispensable that the reader, as far as possible, separate himself from his ordinary associations, and put himself by a kind of mental transmutation into the very circumstances of the writers. He must set himself down in the midst of Oriental scenery—gaze upon the sun, sky, mountains and rivers of Asia—go forth with the nomade tribes of the desert—follow their flocks—travel with their caravans—rest in their tents—lodge in their khans—load and unload their camels—drink at their watering places—pause during the heat of the day under their palms—cultivate the fields with their own rude implements—gather in or glean after their harvests—beat out and ventilate the grain in their open threshing floors—dress in their costume—note their proverbial or idiomatic forms of speech, and listen to the strain of

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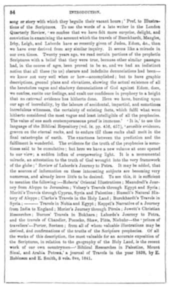

song or story with which they beguile their vacant hours;' Pref. to Illustrations of the Scriptures. To use the words of a late writer in the London Quarterly Review, 'we confess that we have *felt* more surprise, delight, and conviction in examining the account which the travels of Burckhardt, Mangles, Irby, Leigh, and Laborde have so recently given of Judea, Edom, &c., than we have ever derived from any similar inquiry. It seems like a miracle in our own times. Twenty years ago, we read certain portions of the prophetic Scriptures with a belief that they were true, because other similar passages had, in the course of ages, been proved to be so, and we had an indistinct notion that all these (to us) obscure and indefinite denunciations had been—we know not very well when or how—accomplished; but to have graphic descriptions, ground plans and elevations, showing the actual existence of all the heretofore vague and shadowy denunciations of God against Edom, does, we confess, excite our feelings, and exalt our confidence in prophecy to a height that no *external* evidence has hitherto done. Here we have, bursting upon our age of incredulity, by the labours of accidental, impartial, and sometimes incredulous witnesses, the certainty of existing facts, which fulfil what were hitherto considered the most vague and least intelligible of all the prophecies. The value of one such contemporaneous proof is immense.' 'It is,' to use the language of the Biblical Repository (vol. ix. pp. 456, 457), '*sensible evidence*, graven on the eternal rocks, and to endure till those rocks shall melt in the final catastrophe of earth. The exactness between the prediction and the fulfilment is wonderful. The evidence for the truth of the prophecies is sometimes said to be cumulative; but here we have a new volume at once opened to our view; a sudden influx of overpowering light. It is a monumental miracle, an attestation to the truth of God wrought into the very framework of the globe;' Review of Laborde's Journey to Petra. It may be added, that the sources of information on these interesting subjects are becoming very numerous, and already leave little to be desired. To see this, it is sufficient to mention the following:—Roberts' Oriental Illustrations; Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem; Volney's Travels through Egypt and Syria; Mariti's Travels through Cyprus, Syria and Palestine; Russell's Natural History of Aleppo; Clarke's Travels in the Holy Land; Burckhardt's Travels in Syria; ——— Travels in Nubia and Egypt; Keppel's Narrative of a Journey from India to England; Morier's Journey through Persia; Jowett's Christian Researches; Burnes' Travels in Bokhara; Laborde's Journey to Petra, and the travels of Chandler, Pococke, Shaw, Pitts, Niebuhr—the 'prince of travellers'—Porter, Seetzen; from all of whom valuable illustrations may be derived, and confirmations of the truths of the Scripture prophecies. Of all the works of this description, the most valuable for an accurate exposition of the Scriptures, in relation to the geography of the Holy Land, is the recent work of our own countrymen—'Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petræa,' a journal of Travels in the year 1838, by E. Robinson and E. Smith, 3 vols. 8vo, 1841.

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THE BOOK
OF
THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I.

56

56 ISAIAH. [B.C. 700.

THE vision [a] of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days [b] of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

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B.C. 700.] CHAPTER I. 57

2 Hear, [a] O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the LORD hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children,[b] and they have rebelled against me:

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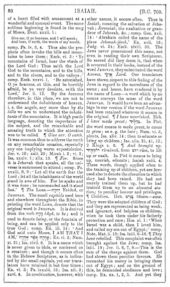

58 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

of a heart filled with amazement at a wonderful and unusual event. The same sublime beginning is found in the song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 1:

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

comp. Ps. iv. 3, 4. Thus also the prophets often invoke the hills and mountains to hear them; Ezek. vi. 3: 'Ye mountains of Israel, hear the words of the Lord God: Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, and to the rivers, and to the valleys;' comp. Ezek. xxxvi. 1. 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord,' Jer. ii. 12. By the *heavens* therefore, in this place, we are not to understand the *inhabitants* of heaven, i. e. the angels, any more than by *the hills* we are to understand the *inhabitants* of the mountains. It is high poetic language, denoting the *importance* of the subject, and the remarkable and amazing truth to which the attention was to be called. ¶ *Give ear, O earth.* It was common thus to address the earth on any remarkable occasion, especially any one implying warm expostulation, Jer. v. 19; xxii. 29; Micah i. 2; vi. 2; Isa. xxxiv. 1; xlix. 13. ¶ *For.* Since it is Jehovah that speaks, all the universe is summoned to attend; comp. Ps. xxxiii. 8, 9: 'Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.' ¶ *The* LORD.—יְהוָֹה *Yehôvâh*, or JEHOVAH. The small *capitals* used here and elsewhere throughout the Bible, in printing the word LORD, denote that the original word is JEHOVAH. It is derived from the verb הָיָה *hâyâ, to be;* and is used to denote *being*, or the fountain of being, and can be applied only to the true God; comp. Ex. iii. 14: 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM,' אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה; Ex. vi. 3; Num. xi. 21; Isa. xlvii. 8. It is a name which is never given to idols, or conferred on a creature; and though it occurs often in the Hebrew Scriptures, as is indicated by the small capitals, yet our translators have retained it but four times; Ex. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxiii. 18; Isa. xii. 2; xxvi. 4. In *combination*, however, with other names, it occurs often. Thus in *Isaiah*, meaning the salvation of Jehovah; *Jeremiah*, the exaltation or grandeur of Jehovah, &c.; comp. Gen. xxii. 14: 'Abraham called the name of the place *Jehovah-jireh*,' Ex. xvii. 15; Judg. vi. 24; Ezek. xlviii. 35. The Jews never pronounced this name, not even in reading their own Scriptures. So sacred did they deem it, that when it occurred in their books, instead of the word JEHOVAH, they substituted the word ADONAI, אֲדֹנָי *Lord.* Our translators have shown respect to this feeling of the Jews in regard to the sacredness of the name; and hence, have rendered it by the name of LORD—a word which by no means conveys the sense of the word JEHOVAH. It would have been an advantage to our version if the word JEHOVAH had been retained wherever it occurs in the original. ¶ *I have nourished.* Heb. *I have made great;* גִּדַּלְתִּי. In Piel, the word means *to make great, to cause to grow;* as e. g. the hair; Num. vi. 5, plants, Isa. xliv. 14; then to educate or bring up children; Isa. xlix. 21, 41, 13; 2 Kings x. 6. ¶ *And brought up.* רוֹמַמְתִּי *rômămtî*, from רוּם *rūm*, to lift up or exalt. In Piel it means to bring up, nourish, educate; Isaiah xxiii. 4. These words, though applied often to the training up of children, yet are here used also to denote the *elevation* to which they had been raised. He had not merely trained them up, but he had trained them up to *an elevated station;* to peculiar honour and privileges. ¶ *Children.* Heb. בָּנִים *bânim—sons.* They were the adopted children of God; and they are represented as being weak, and ignorant, and helpless as children, when he took them under his fatherly protection and care; Hos. xi. 1: 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt;' comp. Note, Mat. ii. 15; Isa. lxiii. 8–16. ¶ *They have rebelled.* This complaint was often brought against the Jews; comp. Isa. lxiii. 10; Jer. ii. 6, 7, 8.—This is the sum of the charge against them. God had shown them peculiar favours. He recounted his mercy in bringing them out of Egypt; and on the ground of this, he demanded obedience and love; comp. Ex. xx. 1, 2, 3. And yet they

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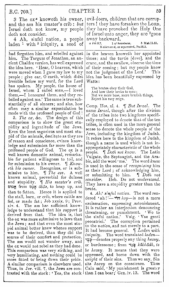

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 59

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

4 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden [1] with [b] 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 [2]gone away backward.

a Jer.8.7. 1 of heaviness. b Mat.3.7.
2 alienated, or separated, Ps.58.3.

had forgotten him, and rebelled against him. The Targum of Jonathan, an ancient Chaldee version, has well expressed the idea here. 'Hear, O heavens, which were moved when I gave my law to my people: give ear, O earth, which didst tremble before my word, for the Lord has spoken. My people, the house of Israel, whom I called sons,—I loved them,—I honoured them, and they rebelled against me.' The same is true substantially of all sinners; and alas, how often may a similar expostulation be made with the professed people of God!

3. *The ox, &c.* The design of this comparison is to show the great stupidity and ingratitude of the Jews. Even the least sagacious and most stupid of the animals, destitute as they are of reason and conscience, evince knowledge and submission far more than the professed people of God. The ox is a well known domestic animal, remarkable for patient willingness to toil, and for submission to his owner. ¶ *Knoweth his owner.* Recognizes, or is submissive to him. ¶ *The ass.* A well known animal, proverbial for dulness and stupidity. ¶ *His master's crib.* אֵבוּס from אָבַס *âbăs*, to heap up, and then to fatten. Hence it is applied to the stall, barn, or crib, where cattle are fed, or made fat; Job xxxix. 9; Prov. xiv. 4. The ass has sufficient knowledge to understand that his *support* is derived from that. The idea is, that the ox was more submissive to laws than the Jews; and that even the most stupid animal better knew whence support was to be derived, than they did the source of their comfort and protection. The ass would not wander away, and the ox would not rebel as they had done. This comparison was very striking, and very humiliating, and nothing could be more fitted to bring down their pride. A similar comparison is elsewhere used. Thus, in Jer. viii. 7, the Jews are contrasted with the stork: 'Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle [dove], and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.' This idea has been beautifully expressed by Watts:

The brutes obey their God,
And bow their necks to men;
But we more base, more brutish things,
Reject his easy reign.

Comp. Hos. xi. 4. ¶ *But Israel.* The name *Israel*, though after the division of the tribes into two kingdoms specifically employed to denote that of the ten tribes, is often used in the more general sense to denote the whole people of the Jews, including the kingdom of Judah. It refers here to the kingdom of Judah, though a name is used which is not inappropriately characteristic of the whole people. ¶ *Doth not know.* The Latin Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Arabic, add the word 'me.' The word *know* is used in the sense of *recognizing* him as their Lord; of *acknowledging* him, or submitting to him. ¶ *Doth not consider.* Heb. Do not *understand.* They have a stupidity greater than the brute.

4. *Ah! sinful nation.* The word rendered 'ah!'—הוֹי *hoy*—is not a mere exclamation, expressing astonishment. It is rather an interjection denouncing threatening, or punishment. 'Wo to the sinful nation.' Vulg. 'Vae genti peccatrici.' The corruption pertained to the *nation*, and not merely to a part. It had become general. ¶ *Laden with iniquity.* The word translated *laden*—כֶּבֶד—denotes properly any thing *heavy*, or burdensome; from כָּבֵד *kâbēdh, to be heavy.* It means that they were oppressed, and borne down with the *weight* of their sins. Thus we say, Sin sits *heavy* on the conscience. Thus Cain said, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' Gen. iv. 13. The word

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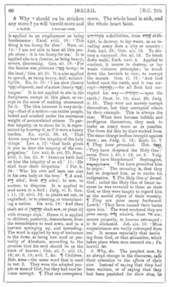

60 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

5 Why [a] should ye be stricken any more? ye will [1]revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

a Je.5.3. 1 increase revolt.

is applied to an *employment* as being burdensome; Exod. xviii. 18: 'This thing is too *heavy* for thee.' Num. xi. 14: 'I am not able to bear all this people alone; it is too *heavy* for me.' It is applied also to a *famine*, as being heavy, severe, distressing. Gen. xii. 10: 'For the famine was *grievous* (כָּבֵד *heavy*) in the land;' Gen. xli. 31. It is also applied to *speech*, as being heavy, dull, unintelligible. Ex. iv. 10: 'I am slow (heavy כְּבַד) of speech, and of a slow (heavy כְּבַד) tongue.' It is not applied to *sin* in the Scriptures, except in this place, or except in the sense of making atonement for it. The idea however is very striking—that of a *nation*—an entire people, bowed and crushed under the enormous weight of accumulated crimes. To pardon iniquity, or to *atone* for it, is represented by *bearing it*, as if it were a heavy burden. Ex. xxviii. 38, 43, 'That Aaron may *bear* the iniquity of the holy things.' Lev. x. 17: 'God hath given it you to *bear* the iniquity of the congregation.' Lev. xxii. 9; xvi. 22; Num. xviii. 1; Isa. liii. 6: 'JEHOVAH hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' 11: 'He shall *bear* their iniquities.' 1 Pet. ii. 24: 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' ¶ *A seed.* זֶרַע *zĕrä*, from זָרַע *zârä*, to sow, to scatter, to disperse. It is applied to seed sown in a field; Judg. vi. 3; Gen. i. 11, 12; xlvii. 23; to plants set out, or engrafted; or to planting, or transplanting a nation. Isa. xvii. 10: 'And thou shalt *set it* [תִּזְרָעֶנּוּ shalt sow, or plant it] with strange slips.' Hence it is applied to children, posterity, descendants, from the resemblance to seed sown, and to a harvest springing up, and spreading. The word is applied by way of eminence to the Jews, as being THE *seed* or posterity of Abraham, according to the promise that his seed should be as the stars of heaven; Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 15, 16; xv. 5, 18; xvii. 7, &c. ¶ *Children.* Heb. *sons*—the same word that is used in ver. 2. They were the adopted people or sons of God, but they had now become corrupt. ¶ *That are corrupters.* מַשְׁחִיתִים *măshhithim*, from שָׁחַת *shâhhăth*, to destroy, to lay waste, as an invading army does a city or country; Josh. xxii. 33; Gen. xix. 13. To destroy a vineyard; Jer. xii. 10. To break down walls; Ezek. xxvi. 4. Applied to conduct, it means to *destroy*, or lay waste virtuous principles; to break down the barriers to vice; to corrupt the morals. Gen. vi. 12: 'And God looked upon the earth, and it was *corrupt*—נִשְׁחָתָה;—for all flesh had corrupted his way—הִשְׁחִית—upon the earth;' Deut. iv. 16; xxxi. 29; Judg. ii. 19. They were not merely corrupt themselves, but they corrupted others by their example. This is always the case. When men become infidels and profligates themselves, they seek to make as many more so as possible. The Jews did this by their wicked lives. The same charge is often brought against them; see Judg. ii. 12; Zeph. iii. 7. ¶ *They have provoked.* Heb. נִאֲצוּ. 'They have *despised* the Holy One;' comp. Prov. i. 30; v. 12; xv. 5. Vulg. 'They have *blasphemed*.' Septuagint, παρωργίσατε. 'You have *provoked* him to anger.' The meaning is, that they had so *despised* him, as to excite his indignation. ¶ *The Holy One of Israel.* God; called the Holy One of Israel because he was revealed to them as *their* God, or they were taught to regard him as the sacred object of their worship. ¶ *They are gone away backward.* Lowth: 'They have turned their backs upon him.' The word rendered *they are gone away*, נָזֹרוּ *nâzōrū*, from זוּר *zūr*, means properly, *to become estranged; to be alienated.* Job. xix. 13: 'Mine acquaintance are verily *estranged* from me.' It means especially that declining from God, or that alienation, which takes place when men commit sin; Ps. lxxviii. 30.

5. *Why, &c.* The prophet now, by an abrupt change in the discourse, calls their attention to the *effects* of their sins. Instead of saying that they *had* been smitten, or of saying that they had been punished *for their sins*, he

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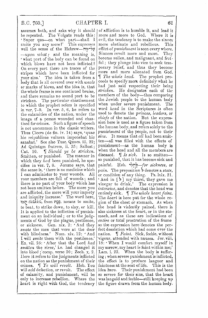

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER I. 61

assumes both, and asks why it should be repeated. The Vulgate reads this: 'Super quo—on what part—shall I smite you any more?' This expresses well the sense of the Hebrew—עַל־מֶה—*upon what;* and the meaning is, 'what part of the body can be found on which blows have not been inflicted? On every part there are traces of the stripes which have been inflicted for your sins.' The idea is taken from a body that is all covered over with *weals* or marks of blows, and the idea is, that the whole frame is one continued bruise, and there remains no sound part to be stricken. The particular chastisement to which the prophet refers is specified in ver. 7–9. In ver. 5, 6, he refers to the calamities of the nation, under the image of a person wounded and chastised for crimes. Such a figure of speech is not uncommon in the classic writers. Thus Cicero (de fin. iv. 14) says, 'quae hic reipublicae vulnera imponebat hic sanabat.' See also Tusc. Quaes. iii. 22; Ad Quintum fratrem, ii. 25; Sallust; Cat. 10. ¶ *Should ye be stricken.* Smitten, or punished. The manner in which they *had* been punished, he specifies in ver. 7, 8. Jerome says, that the sense is, 'there is no medicine which I can administer to your wounds. All your members are full of wounds; and there is no part of your body which has not been smitten before. The more you are afflicted, the more will your impiety and iniquity increase.' The word here, תֻכּוּ *thŭkkū*, from נָכָה, means to smite, to beat, to strike down, to slay, or kill. It is applied to the infliction of punishment on an individual; or to the judgments of God by the plague, pestilence, or sickness. Gen. xix. 2: 'And they *smote* the men that were at the door with blindness.' Num. xiv. 12: 'And I will *smite* them with the pestilence.' Ex. vii. 25: 'After that the Lord *had smitten* the river,' i.e. had changed it into blood; comp. verse 20; Zech. x. 2. Here it refers to the judgments inflicted on the nation as the punishment of their crimes. ¶ *Ye will revolt.* Heb. You will *add* defection, or revolt. The effect of calamity, and punishment, will be only to increase rebellion. Where the heart is right with God, the tendency of affliction is to humble it, and lead it more and more to God. Where it is evil, the tendency is to make the sinner more obstinate and rebellious. This effect of *punishment* is seen every where. Sinners revolt more and more. They become sullen, and malignant, and fretful; they plunge into vice to seek temporary relief, and thus they become more and more alienated from God. ¶ *The whole head.* The prophet proceeds to specify more definitely what he had just said respecting their being *stricken.* He designates each of the members of the body—thus comparing the Jewish people to the human body when under severe punishment. The word *head* in the Scriptures is often used to denote the *princes, leaders,* or *chiefs* of the nation. But the expression here is used as a figure taken from the human body, and refers solely to the *punishment* of the people, not to their *sins.* It means that *all* had been smitten—all was filled with the effects of punishment—as the human body is when the head and all the members are diseased. ¶ *Is sick.* Is so smitten—so punished, that it has become sick and painful. Heb. לָחֳלִי—*for sickness,* or *pain.* The preposition לְ denotes a *state,* or condition of any thing. Ps. lxix. 21. 'And in [לְ] my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.' The expression is *intensive,* and denotes that the head was entirely sick. ¶ *The whole heart faint.* The *heart* is here put for the whole region of the chest or stomach. As when the head is violently pained, there is also sickness at the heart, or in the stomach, and as these are indications of *entire* or *total* prostration of the frame so the expression here denotes the perfect desolation which had come over the nation. ¶ *Faint.* Sick, feeble, without vigour, attended with nausea. Jer. viii. 18: 'When I would comfort myself in my sorrow, my heart is faint within me;' Lam. i. 22. When the body is suffering; when severe punishment is inflicted, the effect is to produce languor and faintness at the seat of life. This is the idea here. Their punishment had been so severe for their sins, that the heart was languid and feeble—still keeping up the figure drawn from the human body.

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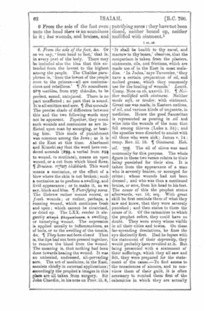

62 ISAIAH. [B.C. 700.

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.[1]

[1] or, oil.

6. *From the sole of the foot,* &c. Or as we say, 'from head to foot,' that is, in every part of the body. There may be included also the idea that this extended from the lowest to the highest among the people. The Chaldee paraphrase is, 'from the lowest of the people even to the princes—all are contumacious and rebellious.' ¶ *No soundness.* מְתֹם *methōm,* from תָּמַם *thâmăm,* to be perfect, sound, uninjured. There is no part unaffected; no part that is sound. It is all smitten and sore. ¶ *But wounds.* The precise shade of difference between this and the two following words may not be apparent. *Together,* they mean such wounds and contusions as are inflicted upon man by scourging, or beating him. This mode of punishment was common among the Jews; as it is at the East at this time. Abarbanel and Kimchi say that the word here rendered *wounds* (פֶּצַע, a verbal from פָּצַע to wound, to mutilate), means an open wound, or a cut from which blood flows. ¶ *Bruises.* חַבּוּרָה *hhăbbūrâ.* This word means a contusion, or the effect of a blow where the skin is not broken; such a contusion as to produce a swelling, and livid appearance; or to make it, as we say, black and blue. ¶ *Putrifying sores.* The Hebrew rather means *recent,* or *fresh* wounds; or rather, perhaps, a running wound, which continues fresh and open; which cannot be cicatrized, or dried up. The LXX. render it elegantly πληγὴ φλεγμαίνουσα, a swelling, or tumefying wound. The expression is applied usually to inflammations, as of boils, or to the swelling of the tonsils, &c. ¶ *They have not been closed.* That is, the lips had not been pressed together, to remove the blood from the wound. The meaning is, that nothing had been done towards healing the wound. It was an unhealed, undressed, all-pervading sore. The art of medicine, in the East, consists chiefly in external applications; accordingly the prophet's images in this place are all taken from surgery. Sir John Chardin, in his note on Prov. iii. 8, 'It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones,' observes, that the comparison is taken from the plasters, ointments, oils, and frictions, which are made use of in the East in most maladies. 'In Judea,' says Tavernier, 'they have a certain preparation of oil, and melted grease, which they commonly use for the healing of wounds.' *Lowth.* Comp. Note on ch. xxxviii. 21. ¶ *Neither mollified with ointment.* Neither *made soft,* or *tender,* with ointment. Great use was made, in Eastern nations, of *oil,* and various kinds of unguents, in medicine. Hence the good Samaritan is represented as pouring in *oil* and wine into the wounds of the man that fell among thieves (Luke x. 34); and the apostles were directed to anoint with oil those who were sick; James v. 14; comp. Rev. iii. 18. ¶ *Ointment.* Heb. *oil.* שֶׁמֶן. The oil of olives was used commonly for this purpose. The whole figure in these two verses relates to their *being punished* for their sins. It is taken from the appearance of a man who is severely beaten, or scourged for crime; whose wounds had not been dressed; and who was thus a continued bruise, or sore, from his head to his feet. The *cause* of this the prophet states afterwards, ver. 10, seq. With great skill he first reminds them of what they saw and knew, that they were severely punished; and then states to them the *cause* of it. Of the calamities to which the prophet refers, they could have no doubt. They were every where visible in all their cities and towns. On these far-spreading desolations, he fixes the eye distinctly first. Had he *begun* with the statement of their *depravity,* they would probably have revolted at it. But being presented with a statement of their sufferings, which they all saw and felt, they were prepared for the statement of the cause.—To find access to the consciences of sinners, and to convince them of their guilt, it is often necessary to remind them first of the calamities in which they are actually

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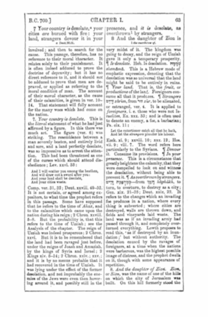

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER I. 63

7 Your country *is* desolate,[a] your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown[1] by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is

[a] Deut.28.51.

[1] the overthrow of.

involved; and then to search for the cause. This passage, therefore, has no reference to their moral character. It relates solely to their punishment. It is often indeed adduced to prove the doctrine of depravity; but it has no direct reference to it, and it should *not* be adduced to prove that men are depraved, or applied as referring to the moral condition of man. The account of their *moral* character, as the cause of their calamities, is given in ver. 10–14. That statement will fully account for the many woes which had come on the nation.

7. *Your country is desolate.* This is the *literal* statement of what he had just affirmed by a figure. In this there was much art. The figure (ver. 6) was striking. The resemblance between a man severely beaten, and entirely livid and sore, and a land perfectly desolate, was so impressive as to arrest the attention. This had been threatened as one of the curses which should attend disobedience; Lev. xxvi. 33:

> And I will scatter you among the heathen,
> And will draw out a sword after you:
> And your land shall be desolate,
> And your cities waste.

Comp. ver. 31, 32; Deut. xxviii. 49–52. It is not certain, or agreed among expositors, to what time the prophet refers in this passage. Some have supposed that he refers to the time of *Ahaz,* and to the calamities which came upon the nation during his reign; 2 Chron. xxviii. 5–8. But the probability is, that this refers to the time of Uzziah; see the Analysis of the chapter. The reign of Uzziah was indeed prosperous; 2 Chron. xxvi. But it is to be remembered that the land had been ravaged just before, under the reigns of Joash and Amaziah, by the kings of Syria and Israel; 2 Kings xiv. 8–14; 2 Chron. xxiv.; xxv.; and it is by no means probable that it had recovered in the time of Uzziah. It was lying under the effect of the former desolation, and not improbably the enemies of the Jews were even then hovering around it, and possibly still in the very midst of it. The kingdom was going to decay, and the reign of Uzziah gave it only a temporary prosperity. ¶ *Is desolate.* Heb. Is desolation. שְׁמָמָה *shemâmâ.* This is a Hebrew mode of emphatic expression, denoting that the desolation was so universal that the land might be said to be entirely in ruins. ¶ *Your land.* That is, the *fruit,* or *productions of the land.* Foreigners consume all that it produces. ¶ *Strangers.* זָרִים *zârīm,* from זוּר *zūr,* to be alienated, or estranged, ver. 4. It is applied to *foreigners,* i. e. those who were not Israelites, Ex. xxx. 33; and is often used to denote an enemy, a foe, a barbarian; Ps. cix. 11:

> Let the extortioner catch all that he hath,
> And let the *strangers* plunder his labour.

Ezek. xi. 9; xxviii. 10; xxx. 12; Hos. vii. 9; viii. 7. The word refers here particularly to the Syrians. ¶ *Devour it.* Consume its provisions. ¶ *In your presence.* This is a circumstance that greatly heightens the calamity, that they were compelled to look on and witness the desolation, without being able to prevent it. ¶ *As overthrown by strangers.* כְּמַהְפֵּכַת זָרִים—from הָפַךְ *hâphăkh,* to turn, to overturn, to destroy as a city; Gen. xix. 21–25; Deut. xxix. 22. It refers to the changes which an invading foe produces in a nation, where every thing is subverted; where cities are destroyed, walls are thrown down, and fields and vineyards laid waste. The land was as if an invading army had passed through it, and completely overturned everything. Lowth proposes to read this, 'as if destroyed by an inundation;' but without authority. The desolation caused by the ravages of foreigners, at a time when the nations were barbarous, was the highest possible image of distress, and the prophet dwells on it, though with some appearance of repetition.

8. *And the daughter of Zion.* *Zion,* or *Sion,* was the name of one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built. On this hill formerly stood the

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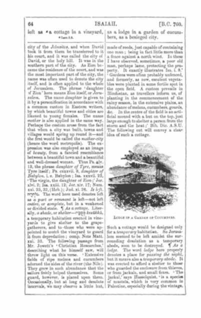

64 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

left as ᵃa cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

ᵃ Lam. 2.6.

city of the *Jebusites*, and when David took it from them he transferred to it his court, and it was called the city of David, or the holy hill. It was in the southern part of the city. As Zion became the residence of the court, and was the most important part of the city, the name was often used to denote the city itself, and is often applied to the whole of Jerusalem. The phrase 'daughter of Zion' here means Zion itself, or *Jerusalem*. The name *daughter* is given to it by a personification in accordance with a common custom in Eastern writers, by which beautiful towns and cities are likened to young females. The name *mother* is also applied in the same way. Perhaps the custom arose from the fact that when a city was built, towns and villages would spring up round it—and the first would be called the *mother-city* (hence the word metropolis). The expression was also employed as an image of *beauty*, from a fancied resemblance between a beautiful town and a beautiful and well-dressed woman. Thus Ps. xlv. 13, the phrase *daughter of Tyre*, means Tyre itself; Ps. cxxxvii. 8, *daughter of Babylon*, i. e. Babylon; Isa. xxxvii. 22, 'The virgin, the daughter of Zion;' Jer. xlvi. 2; Isa. xxiii. 12; Jer. xiv. 17; Num. xxi. 23, 32, (Heb.); Jud. xi. 26. *Is left.* נוֹתְרָה. The word here used denotes left as *a part or remnant* is left—not left *entire, or complete*, but in a weakened or divided state. ¶ *As a cottage.* Literally, *a shade*, or *shelter*—סֻכָּה *kesŭkkâ*, a temporary habitation erected in vineyards to give shelter to the grape-gatherers, and to those who were appointed to *watch* the vineyard to guard it from depredation; comp. Note Matt. xxi. 33. The following passage from Mr. Jowett's 'Christian Researches,' describing what he himself saw, will throw light on this verse. 'Extensive fields of ripe melons and cucumbers adorned the sides of the river (the Nile). They grew in such abundance that the sailors freely helped themselves. Some guard, however, is placed upon them. Occasionally, but at long and desolate intervals, we may observe a little hut, made of reeds, just capable of containing one man; being in fact little more than a fence against a north wind. In these I have observed, sometimes, a poor old man, perhaps lame, protecting the property. It exactly illustrates Isa. i. 8.' 'Gardens were often probably unfenced, and formerly, as now, esculent vegetables were planted in some fertile spot in the open field. A custom prevails in Hindostan, as travellers inform us, of planting in the commencement of the rainy season, in the extensive plains, an abundance of melons, cucumbers, gourds, &c. In the centre of the field is an artificial mound with a hut on the top, just large enough to shelter a person from the storm and the heat;' Bib. Dic. A.S.U. The following cut will convey a clear idea of such a cottage.

LODGE IN A GARDEN OF CUCUMBERS.

Such a cottage would be designed only for a *temporary* habitation. So Jerusalem seemed to be left amidst the surrounding desolation as a temporary abode, soon to be destroyed. ¶ *As a lodge.* The word *lodge* here properly denotes a place for *passing the night*, but it means also a *temporary abode*. It was erected to afford a shelter to those who guarded the enclosure from thieves, or from jackals, and small foxes. 'The jackal,' says Hasselquist, 'is a species of mustela, which is very common in Palestine, especially during the vintage,

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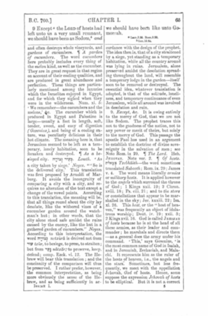

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 65

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

ᵃ Lam. 3.22. Rom. 9.29. ᵇ Gen. 19.24.

and often destroys whole vineyards, and gardens of cucumbers. ¶ *A garden of cucumbers.* The word *cucumbers* here probably includes every thing of the *melon* kind, as well as the cucumber. They are in great request in that region on account of their cooling qualities, and are produced in great abundance and perfection. These things are particularly mentioned among the luxuries which the Israelites enjoyed in Egypt, and for which they sighed when they were in the wilderness. Num. xi. 5: 'We remember—the cucumbers and the melons,' &c. The cucumber which is produced in Egypt and Palestine is large—usually a foot in length, soft, tender, sweet, and easy of digestion (*Gesenius*), and being of a cooling nature, was peculiarly delicious in their hot climate. The meaning here is, that Jerusalem seemed to be left as a temporary, lonely habitation, soon to be forsaken and destroyed. ¶ *As a besieged city.* כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה. *Lowth.* 'As a city taken by siege.' *Noyes.* "'So is the delivered city.' This translation was first proposed by Arnoldi of Marburg. It avoids the incongruity of comparing a city with a city, and requires no alteration of the text except a change of the vowel points. According to this translation, the meaning will be, that all things round about the city lay desolate, like the withered vines of a cucumber garden around the watchman's hut; in other words, that the city alone stood safe amidst the ruins caused by the enemy, like the hut in a gathered garden of cucumbers." *Noyes.* According to this interpretation, the word נְצוּרָה *netsûrâ* is derived not from צוּר *tsûr*, to besiege, to press, to straiten; but from נָצַר *nâtsăr*, to preserve, keep, defend; comp. Ezek. vi. 12. The Hebrew will bear this translation; and the concinnity of the comparison will thus be preserved. I rather prefer, however, the common interpretation, as being more obviously the sense of the Hebrew, and as being sufficiently in accordance with the design of the prophet. The idea then is, that of a city straitened by a siege, yet standing as a temporary habitation, while all the country around was lying in ruins. Jerusalem, alone preserved amidst the desolation spreading throughout the land, will resemble a temporary lodge in the garden—itself soon to be removed or destroyed. The essential idea, whatever translation is adopted, is that of the solitude, loneliness, and temporary continuance of even Jerusalem, while all around was involved in desolation and ruin.

9. *Except*, &c. It is owing entirely to the mercy of God, that we are not like Sodom. The prophet traces this not to the goodness of the nation, not to any power or merit of theirs, but solely to the mercy of God. This passage the apostle Paul has used in an argument to establish the doctrine of divine sovereignty in the salvation of men; see Note Rom. ix 29. ¶ *The Lord.* Heb. JEHOVAH. Note ver. 2. ¶ *Of hosts.* צְבָאוֹת *Tsebhâôth*—the word sometimes translated *Sabaoth*; Rom. ix. 29; James v. 4. The word means literally *armies* or *military hosts*. It is applied however to the *angels* which surround the throne of God; 1 Kings xxii. 19; 2 Chron. xviii. 18; Ps. ciii. 21; and to *the stars* or constellations that appear to be marshalled in the sky; Jer. xxxiii. 22; Isa. xl. 26. This *host*, or the "host of heaven," was frequently an object of idolatrous worship; Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3; 2 Kings xvii. 16. God is called JEHOVAH *of hosts* because he is at the head of all these armies, as their leader and commander; he marshals and directs them—as a general does the army under his command. 'This,' says Gesenius, 'is the most common name of God in Isaiah, and in Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi. It represents him as the ruler of the hosts of heaven, i.e., the angels and the stars.' Sometimes, but less frequently, we meet with the appellation Jehovah, *God* of hosts. Hence, some suppose the expression *Jehovah of hosts* to be elliptical. But it is not a correct

ISAIAH I. 5

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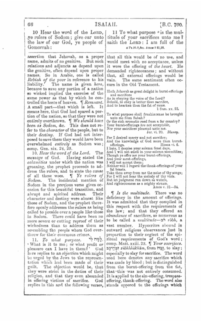

66 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

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

11 To what purpose ᵃ is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the

ᵃ Ps.50.8,&c. Amos 5.21,22.

assertion that Jehovah, as a proper name, admits of no genitive. But such relations and adjuncts as depend upon the genitive, often depend upon proper names. So in Arabic, one is called *Rebiah of the poor* in reference to his liability.' The name is given *here*, because to save any portion of a nation so wicked implied the exercise of the same power as that by which he controlled the hosts of heaven. ¶ *Remnant.* A small part—that which is left. It means here, that God had spared a portion of the nation, so that they were not entirely overthrown. ¶ *We should have been as Sodom*, &c. This does not refer to the *character* of the people, but to their *destiny*. If God had not interposed to save them they would have been overwhelmed *entirely* as Sodom was; comp. Gen. xix. 24, 25.

10. *Hear the word of the Lord.* The *message* of God. Having stated the *calamities* under which the nation was groaning, the prophet proceeds to address the rulers, and to state the *cause* of all these woes. ¶ *Ye rulers of Sodom.* The incidental mention of Sodom in the previous verse gives occasion for this beautiful transition, and abrupt and spirited address. Their character and destiny were almost like those of Sodom, and the prophet therefore openly addresses the rulers as being called to preside over a people like those in Sodom. There could have been no more severe or cutting reproof of their wickedness than to address them as resembling the people whom God overthrew for their enormous crimes.

11. *To what purpose.* לָמָּה לִּי. 'What is it to me; or what profit or pleasure can I have in them?' God here replies to an *objection* which might be urged by the Jews to the representation which had been made of their guilt. The objection would be, that they were strict in the duties of their religion, and that they even abounded in offering victims of sacrifice. God replies in this and the following verses, that all this would be of no use, and would meet with no acceptance, unless it were the offering of *the heart*. He demanded righteousness; and without that, all external offerings would be vain. The same sentiment often occurs in the Old Testament.

Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings
and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to hearken than the fat of rams.
1 Sam. xv. 22.

To what purpose shall frankincense be brought
unto me from Sabah?
Or the rich aromatic reed from a far country?
Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable,
Nor your sacrifices pleasant unto me.
Jer. vi. 20. *Blaney.*

For I desired mercy and not sacrifice;
And the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.
Hosea vi. 6.
I hate, I despise your solemn feast days,
And I will not smell in your solemn assemblies;
Though ye offer me your burnt-offerings,
And your meat-offerings,
I will not accept them;
Neither will I regard the thank-offerings of your
fat beasts.
Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs;
For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
But let judgment run down as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream.
Amos v. 21—24.

¶ *Is the multitude.* There was no deficiency in the amount of offerings. It was admitted that they complied in this respect with the requirements of the law; and that they offered an *abundance* of sacrifices, so numerous as to be called a *multitude*—רֹב *rōbh*, a vast number. Hypocrites abound in outward religious observances just in proportion to their neglect of the spiritual requirements of God's word; comp. Matt. xxiii. 23. ¶ *Your sacrifices.* זִבְחֵיכֶם *zibhhêkhĕm*, from זָבַח, to slay; especially to slay for sacrifice. The word used here denotes any sacrifice which was made by blood; but is distinguished from the burnt-offering from the fact, that this was not entirely consumed. It is applied to the sin-offering, trespass-offering, thank-offering. The word also stands opposed to the offerings which

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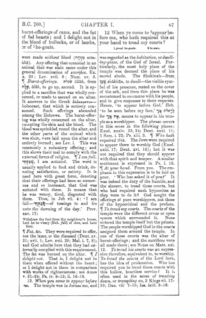

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER I. 67

burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of [1]he-goats.

12 When ye come to [2]appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts?

[1] great he-goats. [2] be seen.

were made *without* blood (מִנְחָה minhhâ). Any offering that consisted in an animal that was slain came under this general denomination of *sacrifice*, Ex. x. 25; Lev. xvii. 8; Num. xv. 5. ¶ *Burnt-offerings.* עֹלוֹת ôlôth, from עָלָה, ôlâh, to go up, ascend. It is applied to a sacrifice that was wholly consumed, or made to ascend on an altar. It answers to the Greek ὁλόκαυστον—*holocaust*, that which is entirely consumed. Such offerings abounded among the Hebrews. The burnt-offering was wholly consumed on the altar, excepting the skin and the blood. The blood was sprinkled round the altar, and the other parts of the animal which was slain, were laid upon the altar and entirely burned; see Lev. i. This was commonly a *voluntary* offering; and this shows their zeal to comply with the external forms of religion. ¶ *I am full.* שָׂבַעְתִּי, I am *satiated*. The word is usually applied to food and drink, denoting satisfaction, or satiety. It is used here with great force, denoting that their offerings had been so numerous and so incessant, that God was *satiated* with them. It means that he was weary, tired, disgusted with them. Thus, in Job vii. 4: 'I am full—שָׂבַעְתִּי—of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.' Prov. xxv. 17:

Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, Lest he be weary (Heb. *full*) of thee, and hate thee.

¶ *Fat, &c.* They were required to offer, not the lame, or the diseased (Deut. xv. 21; xvii. 1; Lev. xvii. 20; Mal. i. 7, 8); and God admits here that they had *externally* complied with this requirement. The fat was burned on the altar. ¶ *I delight not.* That is, I delight not in them when offered without the heart; or I delight not in them in comparison with works of righteousness; see Amos v. 21–24; Ps. iv. 9–13; li. 16–19.

12. *When you come to appear before me.* The temple was in Jerusalem, and was regarded as the *habitation*, or *dwelling-place*, of the God of Israel. Particularly, the most holy place of the temple was deemed the place of his sacred abode. The Shekinah—from שָׁכַן shâkhăn, *to dwell*—the visible symbol of his presence, rested on the cover of the ark, and from this place he was accustomed to commune with his people, and to give responses to their requests. Hence, 'to appear before God,' Heb. 'to be seen before my face,' לֵרָאוֹת פָּנָי for אֶת־פָּנָי, means to appear in his temple as a worshipper. The phrase occurs in this sense in the following places: Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24; Deut. xxxi. 11; 1 Sam. i. 22; Ps. xlii. 3. ¶ *Who hath required this.* The Jews were required to appear there to worship God (Exod. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16); but it was not required that they should appear with that spirit and temper. A similar sentiment is expressed in Ps. l. 16. ¶ *At your hand.* From you. The emphasis in this expression is to be laid on *your*. 'Who has asked it of *you*?' It was indeed the duty of the humble, and the sincere, to tread those courts, but who had required such hypocrites as *they* were to do it? God sought the offerings of pure worshippers, not those of the hypocritical and the profane. ¶ *To tread my courts.* The *courts* of the temple were the different *areas* or open spaces which surrounded it. None entered the temple itself but the priests. The people worshipped God in the *courts* assigned them around the temple. In one of those courts was the altar of burnt-offerings; and the sacrifices were all made there; see Notes on Matt. xxi. 12. *To tread his courts* was an expression therefore, equivalent to, to worship. *To tread the courts* of the Lord here, has the idea of profanation. Who has required you to tread those courts with this hollow, heartless service? It is often used in the sense of *treading down, or trampling on*, 2 Kings vii. 17–20; Dan. viii. 7–10; Isa. lxiii. 3–18.

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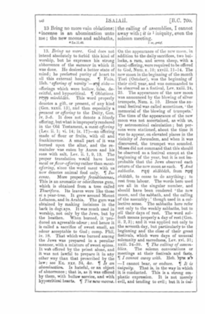

68 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

13 Bring no more vain oblations: [a]incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* [1]iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

[a] Lu.11.42. [1] or, grief.

13. *Bring no more.* God does not intend absolutely to forbid this kind of worship, but he expresses his strong abhorrence of the *manner* in which it was done. He desired a better state of mind; he preferred purity of heart to all this external homage. ¶ *Vain.* Heb. '*offering of vanity*'—שָׁוְא shâv—offerings which were hollow, false, deceitful, and hypocritical. ¶ *Oblations.* מִנְחַת minhhăth. This word properly denotes a gift, or present, of any kind (Gen. xxxii. 13), and then especially a *present* or *offering* to the Deity, Gen. iv. 3–5. It does not denote a *bloody* offering, but what is improperly rendered in the Old Testament, a *meat-offering* (Lev. ii. 1; vi. 14; ix. 17)—an offering made of flour or fruits, with oil and frankincense. A small part of it was burned upon the altar, and the remainder was eaten by Aaron and his sons with salt, Lev. ii. 1, 9, 13. The proper translation would have been *meal* or *flour-offering* rather than *meat-offering*, since the word *meat* with us now denotes animal food only. ¶ *Incense.* More properly *frankincense*. This is an aromatic or odoriferous gum, which is obtained from a tree called *Thurifera*. Its leaves were like those of a pear-tree. It grew around Mount Lebanon, and in Arabia. The gum was obtained by making incisions in the bark in dog-days. It was much used in worship, not only by the Jews, but by the heathen. When burned, it produced an agreeable odour; and hence it is called a sacrifice of sweet smell, an odour acceptable to God; comp. Phil. iv. 18. That which was burned among the Jews was prepared in a peculiar manner, with a mixture of sweet spices. It was offered by the priest alone, and it was not lawful to prepare it in any other way than that prescribed by the law; see Ex. xxx. 34, &c. ¶ *Is an abomination.* Is hateful, or an object of abhorrence; that is, as it was offered by them, with hollow service, and with hypocritical hearts. ¶ *The new moons.* On the appearance of the new moon, in addition to the daily sacrifices, two bullocks, a ram, and seven sheep, with a meal-offering, were required to be offered to God, Num. x. 10; xxviii. 11–14. The new moon in the beginning of the month Tisri (October), was the beginning of their civil year, and was commanded to be observed as a festival, Lev. xxiii. 24, 25. The appearance of the new moon was announced by the blowing of silver trumpets, Num. x. 10. Hence the annual festival was called sometimes, 'the memorial of the blowing of trumpets.' The time of the appearance of the new moon was not ascertained, as with us, by astronomical calculation; but persons were stationed, about the time it was to appear, on elevated places in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and when it was discovered, the trumpet was sounded. Moses did not command that this should be observed as a festival except at the beginning of the year, but it is not improbable that the Jews observed each return of the new moon as such. ¶ *And sabbaths.* שַׁבָּת shăbbâth, from שָׁבַת shâbhăth, to cease to do anything; to rest from labour. The words here used are all in the singular number, and should have been rendered 'the new moon, and the sabbath, and the calling of the assembly;' though used in a collective sense. The sabbaths here refer not only to the weekly sabbaths, but to *all* their days of rest. The word *sabbath* means properly a day of rest (Gen. ii. 2, 3); and it was applied not only to the seventh day, but particularly to the beginning and the close of their great festivals, which were days of unusual solemnity and sacredness, Lev. xvi. 31; xxiii. 24–39. ¶ *The calling of assemblies.* The solemn convocations or meetings at their festivals and fasts. ¶ *I cannot away with.* Heb. לֹא אוּכַל—I cannot bear, or endure. ¶ *It is iniquity.* That is, in the way in which it is conducted. This is a strong emphatic expression. It is not merely evil, and tending to evil; but it is ini-

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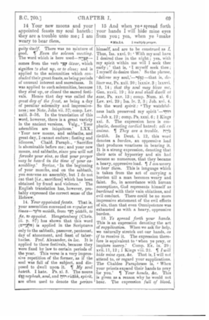

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 69

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

15 And when ye [a]spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye [1]make

[a] Mic.3.4. [1] multiply prayer.

quity itself. There was no mixture of good. ¶ *Even the solemn meeting.* The word which is here used—עֲצָרָה—comes from the verb עָצַר âtzar, which signifies *to shut up*, or *to close*; and is applied to the solemnities which *concluded* their great feasts, as being periods of unusual interest and sacredness. It was applied to such solemnities, because they *shut up*, or *closed* the sacred festivals. Hence that day was called *the great day of the feast*, as being a day of peculiar solemnity and impressiveness; see Note, John vii. 37; comp. Lev. xxiii. 3–36. In the translation of this word, however, there is a great variety in the ancient versions. Vulg., 'Your assemblies are iniquitous.' LXX., 'Your new moons, and sabbaths, and great day, I cannot endure; fasting and idleness.' Chald. Paraph., 'Sacrifice is abominable before me; and your new moons, and sabbaths, *since you will not forsake your sins, so that your prayer may be heard in the time of your assembling*.' Syriac, 'In the beginning of your months, and on the sabbath, you convene an assembly, but I do not eat that [*i.e.*, sacrifices] which has been obtained by fraud and violence.' The English translation has, however, probably expressed the correct sense of the Hebrew.

14. *Your appointed feasts.* That is, your assemblies convened on *regular set times*—מוֹעֵד moêdh, from יָעַד yââdh, *to fix, to appoint*. Hengstenberg (Chris. iii. p. 87) has shown that this word (מוֹעֲדִים) is applied in the Scriptures only to the sabbath, passover, pentecost, day of atonement, and feast of tabernacles. Prof. Alexander, *in loc.* It is applied to those festivals, because they were fixed by law to certain periods of the year. This verse is a very impressive repetition of the former, as if the soul was full of the subject, and disposed to dwell upon it. ¶ *My soul hateth.* I hate. Ps. xi. 5. The nouns נֶפֶשׁ nephesh, *soul*, and רוּחַ rûăhh, *spirit*, are often used to denote the *person* himself, and are to be construed as *I*. Thus, Isa. xxvi. 9: 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early;' that is, 'I myself seek thee; I myself do desire thee.' So the phrase, 'deliver my soul,'—נַפְשִׁי—that is, *deliver me*, Ps. xxii. 20; lxxxiv. 3; lxxxvi. 13, 14; *that thy soul may bless me*, Gen. xxvii. 19; *his soul shall dwell at ease*, Ps. xxv. 13; comp. Num. xi. 6; Lev. xvi. 29; Isa. lv. 2, 3; Job. xvi. 4. So the word *spirit*: 'Thy watchfulness hath preserved my spirit'—רוּחִי—Job x. 12; comp. Ps. xxxi. 6; 1 Kings xxi. 5. The expression here is emphatic, denoting *cordial* hatred: *odi ex animo*. ¶ *They are a trouble.* טֹרַח tôrăhh. In Deut. i. 12, this word denotes a *burden*, an oppressive load that produces weariness in bearing it. It is a strong expression, denoting that their acts of hypocrisy and sin had become so numerous, that they became a heavy, oppressive load. ¶ *I am weary to bear them.* This is language which is taken from the act of carrying a burden till a man becomes weary and faint. So, in accordance with human conceptions, God represents himself as *burdened* with their vain oblations, and evil conduct. There could be no more impressive statement of the evil effects of sin, than that even Omnipotence was exhausted as with a heavy, oppressive burden.

15. *Ye spread forth your hands.* This is an expression denoting the act of *supplication*. When we ask for help, we naturally stretch out our hands, *as if* to receive it. The expression therefore is equivalent to 'when ye pray, or implore mercy.' Comp. Ex. ix. 29; xvii. 11, 12; 1 Kings viii. 22. ¶ *I will hide mine eyes, &c.* That is, I will not attend to, or regard your supplications. The Chaldee Paraphrase is, 'When your priests expand their hands to pray for you.' ¶ *Your hands, &c.* This is given as a reason why he would not hear. The expression *full of blood*,

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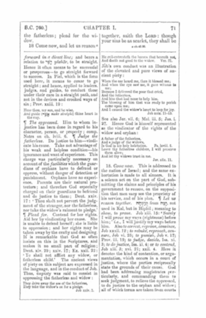

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 71

the fatherless; plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason[a]

together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be

[a] ch.43.26.

forward in a direct line; and bears a relation to יָשַׁר *yâshăr*, to be straight. Hence it often means to be successful or prosperous—to go straight forward to success. In Piel, which is the form used here, it means to *cause* to go straight; and hence, applied to leaders, judges, and guides, to conduct those under their care in a straight path, and not in the devices and crooked ways of sin; Prov. xxiii. 19:

Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide (אַשֵּׁר *make straight*) thine heart in the way.

¶ *The oppressed.* Him to whom injustice has been done in regard to his character, person, or property; comp. Notes on ch. lviii. 6. ¶ *Judge the fatherless.* Do justice to him—vindicate his cause. Take not advantage of his weak and helpless condition—his ignorance and want of experience. This charge was particularly necessary on account of the *facilities* which the guardians of orphans have to defraud or oppress, without danger of detection or punishment. Orphans have no experience. Parents are their natural protectors; and therefore God especially charged on their guardians to befriend and do justice to them; Deut. xxiv. 17: 'Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge.' ¶ *Plead for.* Contend for her rights. Aid her by vindicating her cause. She is unable to defend herself; she is liable to oppression; and her rights may be taken away by the crafty and designing. It is remarkable that God so often insists on this in the Scriptures, and makes it no small part of religion; Deut. xiv. 29; xxiv. 17; Ex. xxii. 22: 'Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.' The ancient views of piety on this subject are expressed in the language, and in the conduct of Job. Thus, *impiety* was said to consist in oppressing the fatherless and widow:

They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
They take the widow's ox for a pledge.
Job xxiv. 3.

He evil-entreateth the barren that beareth not,
And doeth not good to the widow. Ver. 21.

Job's own conduct was an illustration of the elevated and pure views of ancient piety:

When the ear heard me, then it blessed me;
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me;
Because I delivered the poor that cried,
And the fatherless,
And him that had none to help him.
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me;
And I caused the widow's heart to leap for joy.
Job xxix. 11-13.

See also Jer. vii. 6; Mal. iii. 5; Jas. i. 27. Hence God is himself represented as the vindicator of the rights of the widow and orphan:

A father of the fatherless,
And a judge of the widows,
Is God in his holy habitation. Ps. lxviii. 5.
Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive;
And let thy widows trust in me.
Jer. xlix. 11.

18. *Come now.* This is addressed to the nation of Israel; and the same exhortation is made to all sinners. It is a solemn act on the part of God, submitting the claims and principles of his government to *reason*, on the supposition that men may see the propriety of his service, and of his plan. ¶ *Let us reason together.* נִוָּכְחָה from יָכַח, not used in Kal, but in Hiphil; meaning to *show, to prove.* Job xiii. 15: 'Surely I will *prove* my ways (righteous) before him;' *i.e.*, I will justify my ways before him. Also *to correct, reprove, convince*, Job xxxii. 12; *to rebuke, reproach, censure*, Job vi. 25; *to punish*, Job v. 17; Prov. iii. 12; *to judge, decide*, Isa. xi. 3; *to do justice*, Isa. xi. 4; or *to contend*, Job xiii. 3; xvi. 21; xxii. 4. Here it denotes the kind of contention, or argumentation, which occurs in a court of justice, where the parties reciprocally state the grounds of their cause. God had been addressing magistrates particularly, and commanding them to seek judgment, to relieve the oppressed, to do justice to the orphan and widow; all of which terms are taken from courts

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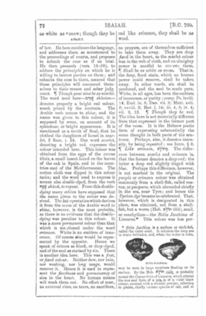

72 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

as white as [a]snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

[a] Ps.51.7.

of law. He here continues the language, and addresses them as accustomed to the proceedings of courts, and proposes to submit the case as if on trial. He then proceeds (vers. 18-20), to adduce the *principles* on which he is willing to bestow pardon on them; and submits the case to them, assured that those principles will commend themselves to their reason and sober judgment. ¶ *Though your sins be as scarlet.* The word used here—שָׁנִים *shânim*—denotes properly a bright red colour, much prized by the ancients. The Arabic verb means to *shine*, and the name was given to this colour, it is supposed by some, on account of its splendour, or bright appearance. It is mentioned as a merit of Saul, that he clothed the daughters of Israel in *scarlet*, 2 Sam. i. 24. Our word *scarlet*, denoting a bright red, expresses the colour intended here. This colour was obtained from the eggs of the *coccus ilicis*, a small insect found on the leaves of the oak in Spain, and in the countries east of the Mediterranean. The cotton cloth was dipped in this colour *twice;* and the word used to express it means also *double-dyed*, from the verb שָׁנָה *shânâ, to repeat.* From this *double-dying* many critics have supposed that the name given to the colour was derived. The interpretation which derives it from the sense of the Arabic word *to shine*, however, is the most probable, as there is no evidence that the *double-dying* was peculiar to this colour. It was a more *permanent* colour than that which is mentioned under the word *crimson.* White is an emblem of innocence. Of course *sins* would be represented by the opposite. Hence we speak of crimes as *black*, or *deep-dyed*, and of the soul as *stained* by sin. There is another idea here. This was a *fast*, or *fixed* colour. Neither dew, nor rain, nor washing, nor long usage, would remove it. Hence it is used to represent the *fixedness* and *permanency* of sins in the heart. No human means will wash them out. No effort of man, no external rites, no tears, no sacrifices, no prayers, are of themselves sufficient to take them away. They are *deep fixed* in the heart, as the scarlet colour was in the web of cloth, and an almighty power is needful to remove them. ¶ *Shall be as white as snow.* That is, the deep, fixed stain, which no human power could remove, shall be taken away. In other words, sin shall be pardoned, and the soul be made pure. White, in all ages, has been the emblem of innocence, or purity; comp. Ps. lxviii. 14; Eccl. ix. 8; Dan. vii. 9; Matt. xvii. 2; xxviii. 3; Rev. i. 14; iii. 4, 5; iv. 4; vii. 9, 13. ¶ *Though they be red.* The idea here is not materially different from that expressed in the former part of the verse. It is the Hebrew poetic form of expressing substantially the same thought in both parts of the sentence. Perhaps, also, it denotes intensity, by being repeated; see Intro. § 8. ¶ *Like crimson,* כַּתּוֹלָע. The difference between *scarlet* and *crimson* is, that the former denotes a *deep red;* the latter a deep red slightly tinged with *blue.* Perhaps this difference, however, is not marked in the original. The *purple* or *crimson* colour was obtained commonly from a shell-fish, called *murex*, or *purpura*, which abounded chiefly in the sea, near Tyre; and hence the *Tyrian dye* became so celebrated. That, however, which is designated in this place, was obtained, not from a shell-fish, but a worm (Heb. תּוֹלָע *tôlâ*), snail, or conchylium—the *Helix Janthina* of Linnæus.* This colour was less per-

* *Helix Janthina* is a mollusc or shell-fish, called the violet snail. It inhabits the deep sea in warm latitudes, and, when the water is calm,

Helix Janthina.

may be seen in large numbers floating on its surface. By the Heb. תּוֹלָע *tôlâ*, is probably meant the *Coccus ilicis* of Linnæus, which attains the size and form of a pea, is of a violet black colour, covered with a whitish powder, adhering to plants, chiefly various species of oak, and so

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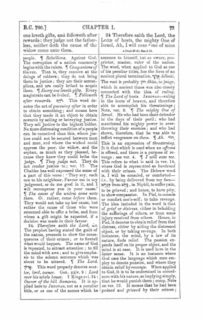

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 73

one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease [a]me of mine

[a] Deut.28.63; Eze.5.13.

people. ¶ *Rebellious.* Against God. The corruption of a nation commonly begins with the rulers. ¶ *Companions of thieves.* That is, they connive at the doings of robbers; they do not bring them to justice; they are their accomplices, and are easily bribed to acquit them. ¶ *Every one loveth gifts.* Every magistrate can be *bribed.* ¶ *Followeth after rewards.* רֹדֵף. This word denotes the act of *pursuing after* in order to obtain something; and means here that they made it an object to obtain rewards by selling or betraying justice. They sell justice to the highest bidder. No more distressing condition of a people can be conceived than this, where justice could not be secured between man and man, and where the wicked could oppress the poor, the widow, and the orphan, as much as they pleased, because they knew they could bribe the judge. ¶ *They judge not.* They do not render justice to; ver. 17. The Chaldee has well expressed the sense of a part of this verse: 'They say, each one to his neighbour, Favour me in my judgment, or do me good in it, and I will recompense you in your cause.' ¶ *The cause of the widow come unto them.* Or, rather, come *before* them. They would not take up her cause, but rather the cause of those who were esteemed able to offer a bribe, and from whom a gift might be expected, if a decision was made in their favour.

24. *Therefore saith the Lord,* &c. The prophet having stated the guilt of the nation, proceeds to show the consequences of their crimes; or to foretell what would happen. The name of God is repeated, to attract attention; to fill the mind with awe; and to give emphasis to the solemn sentence which was about to be uttered. ¶ *The Lord.* אָדוֹן. This word properly denotes *master, lord, owner.* Gen. xxiv. 9: *Lord over his whole house.* 1 Kings xvi. 24: *Owner of the hill Samaria.* It is applied here to JEHOVAH, not as a peculiar title, or as one of the names which he assumes to himself, but as owner, proprietor, master, ruler of the nation. The word, when applied to God as one of his peculiar titles, has the form of an ancient plural termination, אֲדֹנָי *ădonai.* The root is probably דִּין *dhîn*, to judge, which in ancient times was also closely connected with the idea of *ruling.* ¶ *The Lord of hosts.* JEHOVAH—ruling in the hosts of heaven, and therefore able to accomplish his threatenings; Note, ver. 9. ¶ *The mighty One of Israel.* He who had been their defender in the days of their peril; who had manifested his mighty power in overthrowing their enemies; and who had shown, therefore, that he was able to inflict vengeance on *them.* ¶ *Ah.* הוֹי. This is an expression of *threatening.* It is that which is used when an *affront* is offered, and there is a purpose of revenge; see ver. 4. ¶ *I will ease me.* This refers to what is said in ver. 14, where God is represented as *burdened* with their crimes. The Hebrew word is, I will be consoled, or comforted—*i.e.*, by being delivered from my foes—אֶנָּחֵם from נָחַם, in Niphil, to suffer pain, to be grieved; and hence, to have pity, to show compassion. In Piel, to console or comfort one's-self; to take revenge. The idea included in the word is that *of grief or distress*, either in beholding the sufferings of others, or from some injury received from others. Hence, in Piel, it denotes to obtain relief from that distress, either by aiding the distressed object, or by taking revenge. In both instances, the mind, by a law of its nature, finds relief. The passion expends itself on its proper object, and the mind is at ease. It is used here in the *latter* sense. It is an instance where God uses the language which men employ to denote *passion*, and where they obtain relief by *revenge.* When applied to God, it is to be understood in accordance with *his* nature, as implying simply, that he would punish them; comp. Note on ver. 13. It means that he had been *pained* and *grieved* by their crimes;

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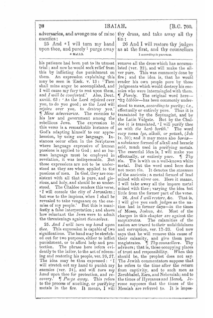

76 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

25 And [a] I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely [1] purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors

a Mal.3.3. 1 according to pureness.

his patience had been put to its utmost trial; and now he would seek relief from this by inflicting due punishment on them. An expression explaining this may be seen in Ezek. v. 13: 'Then shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and *I will be comforted*.' Also, Deut. xxviii. 63: 'As the Lord rejoiced over you, to do you good; so the Lord will rejoice over you, to destroy you.' ¶ *Mine adversaries.* The enemies to his law and government among the rebellious Jews. The expression in this verse is a remarkable instance of God's adapting himself to our apprehension, by using our language. Instances occur often in the Scriptures where language expressive of human passions is applied to God; and as human language must be employed in revelation, it was indispensable. But those expressions are not to be understood as they are when applied to the passions of men. In God, they are consistent with all that is pure, and glorious, and holy, and should be so understood. The Chaldee renders this verse, 'I will console the city of Jerusalem; but woe to the impious, when I shall be revealed to take vengeance on the enemies of my people.' But this is manifestly a false interpretation; and shows how reluctant the Jews were to admit the threatenings against *themselves*.

25. *And I will turn my hand upon thee.* This expression is capable of two significations. The hand may be stretched out for two purposes, either to inflict punishment, or to afford help and protection. The phrase here refers evidently to the latter, to the act of redeeming and restoring his people, ver. 26, 27. The idea may be thus expressed: 'I will stretch out my hand to punish my enemies (ver. 24), and will *turn my hand* upon thee for protection, and recovery.' ¶ *Purge away.* This refers to the process of smelting, or purifying metals in the fire. It means, I will remove all the dross which has accumulated (ver. 22), and will make the silver pure. This was commonly done by fire; and the idea is, that he would render his own people pure by those judgments which would destroy his enemies who were intermingled with them. ¶ *Purely.* The original word here—כַּבֹּר kăbbōr—has been commonly understood to mean, *according to purity*; *i.e.*, effectually or entirely pure. Thus it is translated by the Septuagint, and by the Latin Vulgate. But by the Chaldee it is translated, 'I will purify thee as with *the herb borith*.' The word may mean *lye, alkali, or potash*, (Job ix. 30); and it may mean also *borax*—a substance formed of alkali and boracic acid, much used in purifying metals. The essential idea is, I will make you effectually, or entirely pure. ¶ *Thy tin.* Tin is with us a well-known white metal. But the word used here does not mean *tin*. It denotes the *stannum* of the ancients; a metal formed of lead mixed with silver ore. Here it means, I will take away all the impure metal mixed with thee; varying the idea but little from the former part of the verse.

26. *And I will restore*, &c. That is, I will give you such judges as the nation had in former days—in the times of Moses, Joshua, &c. Most of the charges in this chapter are against the *magistrates*. The calamities of the nation are traced to *their* unfaithfulness and corruption, ver. 17-23. God now says that he will remove this cause of their calamity, and give them pure magistrates. ¶ *Thy counsellors.* Thy advisers; that is, those occupying places of trust and responsibility. *When* this should be, the prophet does not say. The Jewish commentators suppose that he refers to the time after the return from captivity, and to such men as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and to the times of Hyrcanus and Herod. Jerome supposes that the times of the Messiah are referred to. It is impos-

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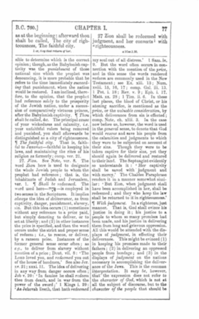

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 77

as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts [1] with [a] righteousness.

1 or, they that return of her. a Hos.1.10.

sible to determine which is the correct opinion; though, as the Babylonish captivity was the *punishment* of those national sins which the prophet was denouncing, it is more probable that he refers to the time immediately *succeeding* that punishment, when the nation would be restored. I am inclined, therefore, to the opinion, that the prophet had reference solely to the prosperity of the Jewish nation, under a succession of comparatively virtuous princes, after the Babylonish captivity. ¶ *Thou shalt be called*, &c. The principal cause of your wickedness and calamity, *i.e.* your unfaithful rulers being removed and punished, you shall afterwards be distinguished as a city of righteousness. ¶ *The faithful city.* That is, faithful to JEHOVAH—faithful in keeping his laws, and maintaining the rites of his religion as formerly; comp. ver. 21.

27. *Zion.* See Note, ver. 8. The word *Zion* here is used to designate the whole Jewish people to whom the prophet had reference; that is, the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, ver. 1. ¶ *Shall be redeemed.* The word used here—פָּדָה—is employed in two senses in the Scriptures. It implies *always* the idea of *deliverance*, as from captivity, danger, punishment, slavery, sin. But this idea occurs (1) sometimes without any reference to a *price* paid, but simply denoting to deliver, or to set at liberty; and (2) in other instances the price is specified, and then the word occurs under the strict and proper sense of redeem; *i.e.*, to rescue, or deliver, by a ransom price. Instances of the former general sense occur often; as *e.g.*, to deliver from slavery without mention of a price; Deut. vii. 8: 'The LORD loved you, and *redeemed* you out of the house of bondmen.' See also Jer. xv. 21; xxxi. 11. The idea of delivering in any way from danger occurs often; Job v. 20: 'In famine he shall *redeem* thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword;' 1 Kings i. 29: 'As Jehovah liveth, that hath *redeemed* my soul out of all distress.' 1 Sam. iv. 9. But the word often occurs in connection with the mention of the *price*, and in this sense the words rendered *redeem* are commonly used in the New Testament; see Ex. xiii. 13; Num. xviii. 15, 16, 17; comp. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 18; Rev. v. 9; Eph. i. 17. Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6. In these last places, the blood of Christ, or his atoning sacrifice, is mentioned as the *price*, or the *valuable consideration*, by which deliverance from sin is effected; comp. Note, ch. xliii. 3. In the case now before us, however, the word is used in the *general* sense, to denote that God would *rescue* and save his people from the calamities and judgments to which they were to be subjected on account of their sins. Though they were to be taken captive for their sins, yet they should again be delivered and restored to their land. The Septuagint evidently so understands it: 'Her captivity shall be saved with judgment and with mercy.' The Chaldee Paraphrase renders it in a manner somewhat similar: 'But Zion, when judgment shall have been accomplished in her, shall be redeemed; and they who keep the law shall be returned to it in righteousness.' ¶ *With judgment.* In a righteous, just manner. That is, God shall evince his justice in doing it; his justice to a people to whom so many promises had been made, and his justice in delivering them from long and grievous oppression. All this would be attended with the displays of *judgment*, in effecting their deliverance. This might be evinced (1) in keeping his promises made to their fathers; (2) in delivering an oppressed people from bondage; and (3) in the displays of *judgment* on the nations necessary in accomplishing the deliverance of the Jews. This is the common interpretation. It *may be*, however, that the expression does not refer to the *character of God*, which is not at all the subject of discourse, but to the *character of the people* that should be

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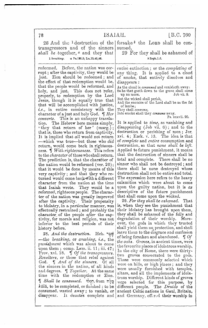

78 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760

28 And the [1] destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, [a] and they that forsake [b] the LORD shall be consumed.

29 For they shall be ashamed of

1 breaking. a Ps.1.6; Lu.12.45,46. b Zeph.1.6.

redeemed. Before, the nation was corrupt; after the captivity, they would be just. Zion should be redeemed; and the effect of that redemption would be, that the people would be reformed, and holy, and just. This does not refer, properly, to redemption by the Lord Jesus, though it is equally true that that will be accomplished with justice, *i.e.*, in entire consistency with the character of a just and holy God. ¶ *Her converts.* This is an unhappy translation. The Hebrew here means simply, 'they that return of her' (marg.); that is, those who return from captivity. It is implied that *all* would not return —which was true—but those who *did* return, would come back in righteousness. ¶ *With righteousness.* This refers to the *character* of those who shall return. The prediction is, that the character of the nation would be reformed (ver. 26); that it would be done by means of this very captivity; and that they who returned would come back with a different character from the nation at the time that Isaiah wrote. They would be a reformed, righteous people. The character of the nation was greatly improved after the captivity. Their propensity to idolatry, in a particular manner, was effectually restrained; and probably the character of the people *after* the captivity, for morals and religion, was not inferior to the best periods of their history before.

28. *And the destruction.* Heb. שֶׁבֶר —the *breaking*, or *crushing*, *i.e.*, the punishment which was about to come upon them; comp. Lam. ii. 11; iii. 47; Prov. xvi. 18. ¶ *Of the transgressors. Revolters*, or those that rebel against God. ¶ *And of the sinners.* Of all the sinners in the nation, of all kinds and degrees. ¶ *Together.* At the same time with the redemption of Zion. ¶ *Shall be consumed.* יִכְלוּ, from כָּלָה *kâlâ*, to be completed, or finished; to be consumed, wasted away; to vanish, or disappear. It denotes complete and entire extinction; or the *completing* of any thing. It is applied to a cloud of smoke, that entirely dissolves and disappears:

As the cloud is *consumed* and vanisheth away:
So he that goeth down to the grave shall come
up no more. Job vii. 9.

But the wicked shall perish,
And the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat
of lambs;
They shall *consume*,
Into smoke shall they *consume* away.
Ps. xxxvii. 20.

It is applied to *time*, as vanishing and disappearing (Job vii. 6); and to the destruction or perishing of men; Jer. xvi. 4; Ezek. v. 13. The idea is that of *complete* and *entire* consumption and destruction, so that *none shall be left*. Applied to future punishment, it means that the destruction of sinners shall be total and complete. There shall be no sinner who shall not be destroyed; and there shall be none destroyed whose destruction shall not be entire and total. The expression here refers to the heavy calamities which were about to come upon the guilty nation, but it is *as* descriptive of the future punishment that shall come upon the wicked.

29. *For they shall be ashamed.* That is, when they see the punishment that their idolatry has brought upon them, they shall be ashamed of the folly and degradation of their worship. Moreover, the gods in which they trusted shall yield them no protection, and shall leave them to the disgrace and confusion of being forsaken and abandoned. ¶ *Of the oaks. Groves*, in ancient times, were the favourite places of idolatrous worship. In the city of Rome, there were thirty-two groves consecrated to the gods. These were commonly selected which were on hills, or high places; and they were usually furnished with temples, altars, and all the implements of idolatrous worship. Different kinds of groves were selected for this purpose, by different people. The *Druids* of the ancient Celtic nations in Gaul, Britain, and Germany, offered their worship in

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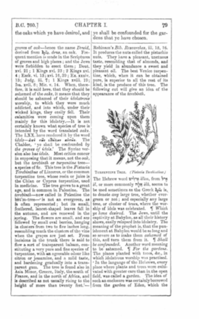

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER I. 79

the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

groves of *oak*—hence the name *Druid*, derived from δρῦς, *drus*, an oak. Frequent mention is made in the Scriptures of groves and high places; and the Jews were forbidden to erect them; Deut. xvi. 21; 1 Kings xvi. 23; 2 Kings xvi. 4; Ezek. vi. 13; xvi. 16, 39; Ex. xxxiv. 13; Judg. iii. 7; 1 Kings xviii. 19; Isa. xvii. 8; Mic. v. 14. When, therefore, it is said here, that they should be ashamed of the *oaks*, it means that they should be ashamed of their *idolatrous worship*, to which they were much addicted, and into which, under their wicked kings, they easily fell. Their calamities were coming upon them mainly for this idolatry.—It is not certainly known what species of tree is intended by the word translated *oaks*. The LXX. have rendered it by the word *idols*—ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων αὐτῶν. The Chaldee, 'ye shall be confounded *by the groves of idols*.' The Syriac version also has *idols*. Most critics concur in supposing that it means, not the *oak*, but the *terebinth or turpentine* tree—a species of fir. This tree is the *Pistacia Terebinthus* of Linnæus, or the common turpentine tree, whose resin or juice is the Chian or Cyprus turpentine, used in medicine. The tree grows to a great age, and is common in Palestine. 'The *terebinth*—now called in Palestine the but'm-tree—'is not an evergreen, as is often represented; but its small, feathered, lancet-shaped leaves fall in the autumn, and are renewed in the spring. The flowers are small, and are followed by small oval berries, hanging in clusters from two to five inches long, resembling much the clusters of the vine when the grapes are just set. From incisions in the trunk there is said to flow a sort of transparent balsam, constituting a very pure and fine species of turpentine, with an agreeable odour like citron or jessamine, and a mild taste, and hardening gradually into a transparent gum. The tree is found also in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, the south of France, and in the north of Africa, and is described as not usually rising to the height of more than twenty feet.'—Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, iii. 15, 16. It produces the nuts called the pistachio nuts. They have a pleasant, unctuous taste, resembling that of almonds, and they yield in abundance a sweet and pleasant oil. The best Venice turpentine, which, when it can be obtained pure, is superior to all the rest of its kind, is the produce of this tree. The following cut will give an idea of the appearance of the *terebinth*.

TURPENTINE TREE. (*Pistacia Terebinthus.*)

The Hebrew word אֵילִים *êlim*, from אַיִל *ēl*, or more commonly אֵלָה *ēlā*, seems to be used sometimes as the Greek δρῦς is, to denote *any* large tree, whether evergreen or not; and especially any large tree, or cluster of trees, where the worship of idols was celebrated. ¶ *Which ye have desired.* The Jews, until the captivity at Babylon, as all their history shows, easily relapsed into idolatry. The meaning of the prophet is, that the punishment at Babylon would be so long and so severe as to make them *ashamed* of this, and turn them from it. ¶ *Shall be confounded.* Another word meaning to be ashamed. ¶ *For the gardens.* The places planted with trees, &c., in which idolatrous worship was practised. 'In the language of the Hebrews, every place where plants and trees were cultivated with greater care than in the open field, was called a garden. The idea of such an enclosure was certainly borrowed from the garden of Eden, which the

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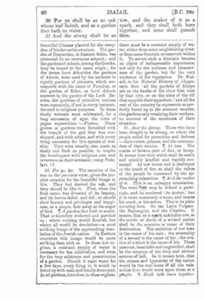

80 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760

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

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*.

bountiful Creator planted for the reception of his favourite creature. The garden of Hesperides, in Eastern fables, was protected by an enormous serpent; and the gardens of Adonis, among the Greeks, may be traced to the same origin; for the terms *horti Adonides*, the gardens of Adonis, were used by the ancients to signify gardens of pleasure, which corresponds with the name of Paradise, or the garden of Eden, as *horti Adonis* answers to the garden of the Lord. Besides, the gardens of primitive nations were commonly, if not in every instance, devoted to religious purposes. In these shady retreats were celebrated, for a long succession of ages, the rites of pagan superstition.'—*Paxton*. These groves or gardens were furnished with the temple of the god that was worshipped, and with altars, and with every thing necessary for this species of worship. They were usually, also, made as shady and dark as possible, to inspire the worshippers with religious awe and reverence on their entrance; comp. Note, lxvi. 17.

30. *For ye, &c.* The mention of the *tree* in the previous verse, gives the prophet occasion for the beautiful image in this. They had desired the oak, and they should be like it. *That*, when the frost came, was divested of its beauty, and its leaves faded, and fell; so should their beauty and privileges and happiness, as a people, *fade away* at the anger of God. ¶ *A garden that hath no water.* That is therefore withered and parched up; where nothing would flourish, but where all would be desolation—a most striking image of the approaching desolation of the Jewish nation. In Eastern countries this image would be more striking than with us. In these hot regions, a constant supply of water is necessary for the cultivation, and even for the very existence and preservation of a garden. Should it want water for a few days, every thing in it would be burnt up with heat, and totally destroyed. In all gardens, therefore, in those regions, there must be a constant supply of water, either from some neighbouring river, or from some fountain or reservoir within it. To secure such a fountain became an object of indispensable importance, not only for the coolness and pleasantness of the garden, but for the very existence of the vegetation. Dr. Russell, in his *Natural History of Aleppo*, says, that 'all the gardens of Aleppo are on the banks of the river that runs by that city, or on the sides of the rill that supplies their aqueduct;' and all the rest of the country he represents as perfectly burnt up in the summer months, the gardens only retaining their verdure, on account of the moistness of their situation.

31. *And the strong.* Those who have been *thought* to be strong, on whom the people relied for protection and defence—their rulers, princes, and the commanders of their armies. ¶ *As tow.* The coarse or broken part of flax, or hemp. It means here that which shall be easily and quickly kindled and rapidly consumed. As tow burns and is destroyed at the touch of fire, so shall the rulers of the people be consumed by the approaching calamities. ¶ *And the maker of it.* This is an unhappy translation. The word פֹּעֲלוֹ *may be* indeed a participle, and be rendered 'its maker,' but it is more commonly *a noun*, and means his *work*, or his *action*. This is its plain meaning here. So the Latin Vulgate the Septuagint, and the Chaldee. It means, that as a spark enkindles tow, so *the works or deeds* of a wicked nation shall be *the occasion* or *cause* of their destruction. The ambition of one man is the cause of his ruin; the sensuality of a second is the cause of his; the avarice of a third is the cause of his. These passions, insatiable and ungratified, shall be the occasion of the deep and eternal sorrows of hell. So it means here, that the crimes and hypocrisy of the nation would be the real cause of all the calamities that would come upon them as a people. ¶ *Shall both burn together.*

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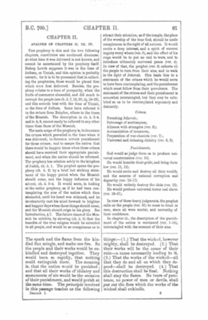

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER II. 81

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS II. III. IV.

THE prophecy in this and the two following chapters, constitutes one continued discourse. At what time it was delivered is not known, and cannot be ascertained by the prophecy itself. Bishop Lowth supposes it was in the time of Jotham, or Uzziah, and this opinion is probably correct; for it is to be presumed that in collecting the prophecies, those would be placed first which were first delivered. Besides, the prophecy relates to a time of prosperity, when the fruits of commerce abounded, and did much to corrupt the people (see ch. ii. 7, 16, 20; iii. 18-23), and this accords best with the time of Uzziah, or the time of Jotham. Some have referred it to the return from Babylon, others to the times of the Messiah. The description in ch. ii. 2-4, and iv. 5, 6, cannot easily be referred to any other times than those of the Messiah.

The main scope of the prophecy is, to denounce the crimes which prevailed in the time when it was delivered; to threaten certain punishment for those crimes; and to assure the nation that there would be happier times when those crimes should have received their appropriate punishment, and when the nation should be reformed. The prophecy has relation solely to the kingdom of Judah, ch. ii. 1. The prophet opens the prophecy (ch. ii. 2) by a brief but striking statement of the happy period when the Messiah should come, and the happy influence of his advent, ch. ii. 2-4. It would seem, in looking at the entire prophecy, as if he had been contemplating the sins of the nation which then abounded, until his heart was sickened, and he involuntarily cast his mind forward to brighter and happier days when these things should cease, and the Messiah should reign in his glory. See Introduction, § 7. The future times of the Messiah he exhibits, by showing (ch. ii. 2) that the benefits of the true religion would be extended to all people, and would be so conspicuous as to attract their attention, as if the temple, the place of the worship of the true God, should be made conspicuous in the sight of all nations. It would excite a deep interest, and a spirit of earnest inquiry every where (ver. 3), and the effect of his reign would be to put an end to wars, and to introduce ultimately universal peace (ver. 4). In view of that, the prophet (ver. 5) exhorts all the people to turn from their sins, and to walk in the light of Jehovah. This leads him to a statement of the crimes which he would seem to have been contemplating, and the punishment which must follow from their prevalence. The statement of the crimes and their punishment is somewhat intermingled, but they may be exhibited so as to be contemplated separately and distinctly.

Crimes.

Forsaking Jehovah;
Patronage of soothsayers;
Alliance with strangers (ver. 6);
Accumulation of treasures;
Preparation of war-chariots (ver. 7);
Universal and debasing idolatry (ver. 8, 9).

Punishments.

God would so judge them as to produce universal consternation (ver. 10).

He would humble their pride, and bring them low (ver. 11, 12).

He would smite and destroy all their wealth, and the sources of national corruption and depravity (ver. 13-17).

He would entirely destroy the idols (ver. 18).

He would produce universal terror and alarm (ver. 19-21).

In view of these heavy judgments, the prophet calls on the people (ver. 22) to cease to trust in men, since all were mortal, and unworthy of their confidence.

In chapter iii., the description of the punishment of the nation is continued (ver. 1-15), intermingled with the account of their sins.

The spark and the flame from the kindled flax mingle, and make one fire. So the people and their works would be enkindled and destroyed together. They would burn so rapidly, that nothing could extinguish them. The meaning is, that the nation would be punished; and that all their works of idolatry and monuments of sin would be the occasion of their punishment, and would perish at the same time. The *principle* involved in this passage teaches us the following things:—(1.) That the wicked, however mighty, shall be destroyed. (2.) That their works will be the *cause* of their ruin—a cause necessarily leading to it. (3.) That the works of the wicked—all that they do and all on which they depend—shall be destroyed. (4.) That this destruction shall be final. Nothing shall stay the flame. No tears of penitence, no power of men or devils, shall *put out* the fires which the works of the wicked shall enkindle.

ISAIAH I. 6

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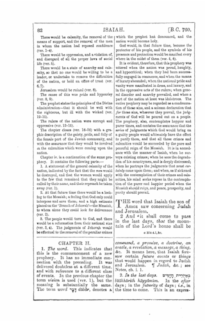

82 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

There would be calamity, the removal of the means of support, and the removal of the men in whom the nation had reposed confidence (ver. 1-4).

There would be oppression, and a violation of, and disregard of all the proper laws of social life (ver. 5).

There would be a state of anarchy and calamity, so that no one would be willing to be a leader, or undertake to remove the difficulties of the nation, or hold an office of trust (ver. 6, 7).

Jerusalem would be ruined (ver. 8).

The cause of this was *pride* and hypocrisy (ver. 8, 9).

The prophet states the principles of the Divine administration—that it should be well with the righteous, but ill with the wicked (ver. 10-11).

The rulers of the nation were corrupt and oppressive (ver. 12-15).

The chapter closes (ver. 16-26) with a graphic description of the gaiety, pride, and folly of the female part of the Jewish community, and with the assurance that they would be involved in the calamities which were coming upon the nation.

Chapter iv. is a continuation of the same prophecy. It contains the following parts:—

1. A statement of the general calamity of the nation, indicated by the fact that the *men* would be destroyed, and that the women would apply to the few that remained that they might be called by their name, and their reproach be taken away (ver. 1).

2. At that future time there would be a looking to the Messiah; a feeling that God only could interpose and save them; and a high estimate placed on the 'Branch of Jehovah'—the Messiah, to whom alone they could look for deliverance (ver. 2).

3. The people would turn to God, and there would be a reformation from their national sins (ver. 3, 4). The judgments of *Jehovah* would be effectual to the removal of the peculiar crimes which the prophet had denounced, and the nation would become holy.

God would, in that *future* time, become the protector of his people, and the symbols of his presence and protection would be manifest every where in the midst of them (ver. 5, 6).

It is evident, therefore, that this prophecy was uttered when the nation was proud, haughty, and hypocritical; when they had been successfully engaged in commerce, and when the means of luxury abounded; when the national pride and vanity were manifested in dress, and luxury, and in the oppressive acts of the rulers; when general disorder and anarchy prevailed, and when a part of the nation at least was idolatrous. The entire prophecy may be regarded as a condemnation of these sins, and a solemn declaration that *for* these sins, wherever they prevail, the judgments of God will be poured out on a people. The prophecy, also, contemplates happier and purer times, and contains the assurance that the *series of* judgments which God would bring on a guilty people would *ultimately* have the effect to purify them, and that all these *crimes* and calamities would be succeeded by the pure and peaceful reign of the Messiah. It is in accordance with the manner of Isaiah, when he surveys existing crimes; when he sees the degradation of his countrymen, and is deeply distressed; when he portrays the judgments that must *certainly* come upon them; and when, as if sickened with the contemplation of their crimes and calamities, his mind seeks repose in the contemplation of the purer and happier period when the Messiah should reign, and peace, prosperity, and purity should prevail.

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

2 And [a] it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be

[a] Mic.4.1,&c.

CHAPTER II.

1. *The word.* This indicates that this is the commencement of a new prophecy. It has no immediate connection with the preceding. It was delivered doubtless at a different time, and with reference to a different class of events. In the previous chapter the term *vision* is used (ver. 1), but the meaning is substantially the same. The term word דָּבָר *dâbâr*, denotes a *command, a promise, a doctrine, an oracle, a revelation, a message, a thing, &c.* It means here, that Isaiah foresaw certain *future events* or *things* that would happen in regard to Judah and Jerusalem. ¶ *Judah, &c.*; see Notes, ch. i. 1.

2. *In the last days.* בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים *bĕâhărith hâyyâmim.* In the *after* days; in the *futurity* of days; *i.e.*, in the time to come. This is an expres-

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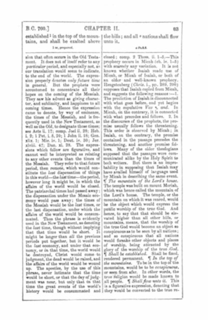

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER II. 83

established [1] in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all [a] nations shall flow unto it.

[1] or, *prepared.*

[a] Ps.2.8.

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sion that often occurs in the Old Testament. It does not of itself refer to any *particular* period, and especially not, as our translation would seem to indicate, to the end of the world. The expression properly denotes *only future time* in general. But the prophets were accustomed to concentrate all their hopes on the coming of the Messiah. They saw his advent as giving character, and sublimity, and happiness to all coming times. Hence the expression came to denote, by way of eminence, the times of the Messiah, and is frequently used in the New Testament, as well as the Old, to designate those times; see Acts ii. 17; comp. Joel ii. 28; Heb. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 5, 20; 1 John ii. 18; Gen. xlix. 1; Mic. iv. 1; Deut. iv. 30; Jer. xlviii. 47; Dan. xi. 28. The expressions which follow are figurative, and cannot well be interpreted as relating to any other events than the times of the Messiah. They refer to that future period, then remote, which would constitute the *last* dispensation of things in this world—the *last* time—the period, however long it might be, in which the affairs of the world would be closed. The patriarchal times had passed away; the dispensation under the Mosaic economy would pass away; the times of the Messiah would be the *last* times, or the last dispensation, under which the affairs of the world would be consummated. Thus the phrase is evidently used in the New Testament, as denoting the *last* time, though without implying that that time would be short. It might be longer than *all* the previous periods put together, but it would be the *last* economy, and under that economy, or *in* that time, the world would be destroyed, Christ would come to judgment, the dead would be raised, and the affairs of the world would be wound up. The apostles, by the use of this phrase, never intimate that the time would be short, or that the day of judgment was near, but only that *in* that time the great events of the world's history would be consummated and closed; comp. 2 Thess. ii. 1-5.—This prophecy occurs in Micah (ch. iv. 1-5) with scarcely any variation. It is not known whether Isaiah made use of Micah, or Micah of Isaiah, or both of an older and well-known prophecy. Hengstenberg (*Chris.* i., pp. 289, 290) supposes that Isaiah copied from Micah, and suggests the following reasons:—1. The prediction of Isaiah is disconnected with what goes before, and yet begins with the copulative *Vav* וְ, *and.* In Micah, on the contrary, it is connected with what precedes and follows. 2. In the discourses of the prophets, the promise usually follows the threatening. This order is *observed* by Micah; in Isaiah, on the contrary, the promise contained in the passage precedes the threatening, and another promise follows. Many of the older theologians supposed that the passages were communicated alike by the Holy Spirit to both writers. But there is no improbability in supposing that Isaiah may have availed himself of language used by Micah in describing the same event. ¶ *The mountain of the Lord's house.* The temple was built on mount Moriah, which was hence called the mountain of the Lord's house. The temple, or the mountain on which it was reared, would be the object which would express the public worship of the true God. And hence, to say that that should be elevated higher than all other hills, or mountains, means, that the worship of the true God would become an object so conspicuous as to be seen by all nations; and so conspicuous that all nations would forsake other objects and places of worship, being attracted by the glory of the worship of the true God. ¶ *Shall be established.* Shall be fixed, rendered permanent. ¶ *In the top of the mountains.* To be in the top of the mountains, would be to be *conspicuous*, or seen from afar. In other words, the true religion would be made known to all people. ¶ *Shall flow unto it.* This is a figurative expression, denoting that they would be converted to the true re-

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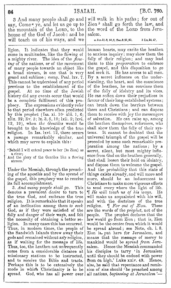

84 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come[a] 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[b] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

a Jer. 31. 6; 50. 5; Zec. 8. 21, 23. b Lu. 24. 47.

ligion. It indicates that they would come in multitudes, like the flowing of a mighty river. The idea of the *flowing* of the nations, or of the movement of many people towards an object like a broad stream, is one that is very grand and sublime; comp. Psal. lxv. 7. This cannot be understood of any period previous to the establishment of the gospel. At no time of the Jewish history did any events occur that would be a complete fulfilment of this prophecy. The expressions evidently refer to that period elsewhere often predicted by this prophet (Isa. xi. 10; xlii. 1, 6; xlix. 22; liv. 3; lx. 3, 5, 10; lxii. 2; lxvi. 12, 19), when *the Gentiles* would be brought to the knowledge of the true religion. In Isa. lxvi. 12, there occurs a passage remarkably similar, and which may serve to explain this:

'Behold I will extend peace to her [to Zion] as a river;
And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.'

Under the Messiah, through the preaching of the apostles and by the spread of the gospel, this prophecy was to receive its full accomplishment.

3. *And many people shall go.* This denotes a prevalent *desire* to turn to the true God, and embrace the true religion. It is remarkable that it speaks of an inclination among them *to seek* God, as if they were satisfied of the folly and danger of their ways, and felt the necessity of obtaining a better religion. In many cases this has occurred. Thus, in modern times, the people of the Sandwich Islands threw away their gods and remained without any religion, as if waiting for the message of life. Thus, too, the heathen not unfrequently come from a considerable distance at missionary stations to be instructed, and to receive the Bible and tracts. Perhaps this is to be extensively the mode in which Christianity is to be spread. God, who has all power over human hearts, may excite the heathen to anxious inquiry; may show them the folly of their religion; and may lead them to this *preparation* to embrace the gospel, and this disposition to *go* and seek it. He has access to all men. By a secret influence on the understanding, the heart, and the conscience of the heathen, he can convince them of the folly of idolatry and its vices. He can soften down their prejudices in favour of their long-established systems; can break down the barriers between them and Christians; and can dispose them to receive with joy the messengers of salvation. He can raise up, among the heathen themselves, reformers, who shall show them the folly of their systems. It cannot be doubted that the universal triumph of the gospel will be preceded by some such remarkable preparation among the nations; by a secret, silent, but most mighty influence from God on the heathen generally, that shall loosen their hold on idolatry, and dispose them to welcome the gospel. And the probability that this state of things exists already, and will more and more, should be an inducement to Christians to make more vigorous efforts to send every where the light of life. ¶ *He will teach us of his ways.* He will make us acquainted with his will, and with the doctrines of the true religion. ¶ *For out of Zion.* These are the words of the *prophet*, not of the people. The prophet declares that the law would go from Zion; that is, Zion would be the centre from which it would be spread abroad; see Note, ch. i. 8. Zion is put here for Jerusalem, and means that the message of mercy to mankind would be spread *from* Jerusalem. Hence the Messiah commanded his disciples to tarry 'in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high.' Luke xxiv. 49. Hence, also, he said that repentance and remission of sins should 'be preached among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*'—

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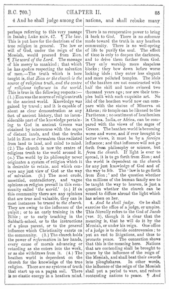

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER II. 85

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many

perhaps referring to this very passage in Isaiah; Luke xxiv. 47. ¶ *The law.* This is put here for the doctrines of the true religion in general. The law or will of God, under the reign of the Messiah, would proceed from Zion. ¶ *The word of the Lord.* The message of his mercy to mankind; that which he has *spoken* respecting the salvation of men.—The truth which is here taught is, *that Zion or the church is the source of religious truth, and the centre of religious influence in the world.* This is true in the following respects:—(1.) Zion was the source of religious truth to the ancient world. Knowledge was gained by travel; and it is capable of about as clear demonstration as any fact of ancient history, that no inconsiderable part of the knowledge pertaining to God in ancient Greece was obtained by intercourse with the sages of distant lands, and that the truths held in Zion or Jerusalem thus radiated from land to land, and mind to mind. (2.) The church is now the centre of religious truth to the world around it. (*a.*) The world by its philosophy never originates a system of religion which it is desirable to retain, and which conveys any just view of God or the way of salvation. (*b.*) The most crude, unsettled, contradictory, and vague opinions on religion prevail in this community called '*the world.*' (*c.*) If in this community there are any opinions that are true and valuable, they can in most instances be traced to *the church*. They are owing to the influence of the pulpit; or to an early training in the Bible; or to early teaching in the Sabbath-school, or to the instructions of a pious parent, or to the *general* influence which Christianity exerts on the community. (3.) The church holds the power of *reformation* in her hands, every cause of morals advancing or retarding as she enters into the work, or as she withdraws from it. (4.) The heathen world is dependent on the church for the knowledge of the true religion. There are *no* systems of truth that start up on a pagan soil. There is no elastic energy in a heathen mind. There is no recuperative power to bring it back to God. There is no *advance* made toward the truth in any heathen community. There is no well-spring of life to purify the soul. The effect of time is only to deepen the darkness, and to drive them farther from God. They only worship mere shapeless blocks; they bow down before worse looking *idols*; they enter less elegant and more polluted temples. The idols of the heathen are not constructed with half the skill and taste evinced two thousand years ago; nor are their temples built with such exquisite art. No idol of the heathen world now can compare with the statue of Minerva at Athens; no temple can be likened to the Parthenon; no sentiment of heathenism in China, India, or Africa, can be compared with the views of the sages of Greece. The heathen world is becoming worse and worse, and if ever brought to better views, it must be by a *foreign* influence; and that influence will not go forth from philosophy or science, but *from the church*. If light is ever to spread, it is to go forth from Zion; and the world is dependent on *the church* for any just knowledge of God and of the way to life. The 'law is to go forth from Zion;' and the question whether the millions of the human family are to be taught the way to heaven, is just a question whether the church can be roused to diffuse abroad the light which has arisen on her.

4. *And he shall judge.* Or he shall exercise the office of a judge, or umpire. This *literally* refers to the God of Jacob (ver. 3), though it is clear that the meaning is, that he will do it by the Messiah, or under his reign. One office of a judge is to *decide controversies*; to put an end to litigations, and thus to promote peace. The connection shows that this is the meaning here. Nations that are contending shall be brought to peace by the influence of the reign of the Messiah, and shall beat their swords into ploughshares. In other words, the influence of the reign of the Messiah shall put a period to wars, and reduce contending nations to peace. ¶ *And*

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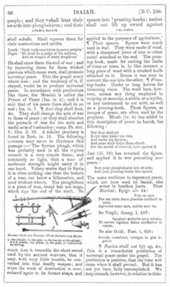

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people; and they[a] shall beat their swords into ploughshares; and their spears into [1] pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against

a Ps. 46. 9; Hos. 2. 18. 1 or, scythes.

shall rebuke. Shall *reprove* them for their contentions and strifes.

Lowth: 'Shall work conviction in many peoples.'
Noyes: 'He shall be a judge of the nations,
And an umpire of many kingdoms.'

He shall show them the evil of war; and by reproving them for those wicked passions which cause wars, shall promote univers*al* peace. This the gospel every where does; and the tendency of it, if obeyed, would be to produce universal peace. In accordance with predictions like these, the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. ix. 6); and it is said that of his peace there shall be no end; Isa. ix. 7. ¶ *And they shall beat, &c.* They shall change the arts of war to those of peace; or they shall abandon the pursuits of war for the mild and useful arts of husbandry; comp. Ps. xlvi. 9; Hos. ii. 20. A similar prophecy is found in Zech. ix. 10. The following extracts may serve to illustrate this passage:—'The Syrian plough, which was probably used in all the regions around, is a very simple frame, and commonly so light, that a man of moderate strength might carry it in one hand. Volney states that in Syria it is often nothing else than the branch of a tree, cut below a bifurcation, and used without wheels. The ploughshare is a piece of iron, broad but not large, which tips the end of the shaft. So much does it resemble the short sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may, with very little trouble, be converted into that deadly weapon; and when the work of destruction is over, reduced again to its former shape, and applied to the purposes of agriculture.' ¶ *Their spears.* Spears were much used in war. They were made of wood, with a sharpened piece of iron or other metal attached to the end. The pruning-hook, made for cutting the limbs of vines or trees, is, in like manner, a long piece of wood with a crooked knife attached to it. Hence it was easy to convert the one into the other. ¶ *Pruning-hooks.* Hooks or long knives for trimming vines. The word here, however, means any thing employed in *reaping or mowing*, a sickle, or a scythe, or any instrument to *cut with*, as well as a pruning-hook. These figures, as images of peace, are often used by the prophets. Micah (iv. 4) has added to this description of peace in Isaiah, the following:

But they shall sit
Every man under his vine,
And under his fig-tree;
And none shall make them afraid:
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

Joel (iii. 10) has reversed the figure, and applied it to war prevailing over peace:

Beat your ploughshares into swords;
And your pruning-hooks into spears.

The same emblems to represent peace, which are here used by Isaiah, also occur in heathen poets. Thus Martial; Epigr. xiv. 34:

Falx ex ense.
Pax me certa ducis placidos conflavit in usus,
Agricolae nunc sum, militis ante fui.

So Virgil; Georg. 1, 507:

Squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.

So also Ovid; Fast. 1, 699:

Sarcula cessabant, versique in pila ligones.

¶ *Nation shall not lift up, &c.* This is a remarkable prediction of universal peace under the gospel. The prediction is positive, that the time will come when it shall prevail. But it has not yet been fully accomplished. We may remark, however, in relation to this:

MODERN ORIENTAL PLOUGH.—From Fellow's Asia Minor.
a, the plough; *b*, the pole; *c*, the handle or plough-tail; *d d d*, shares; *e e*, yokes; *f*, the goad, or instrument for driving.

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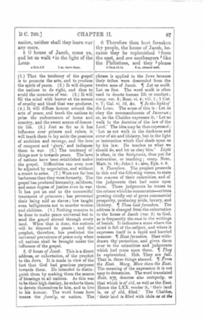

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nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk [a] in the light of the LORD.

6 Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob, because they be replenished [1] from the east, and are soothsayers [b] like the Philistines, and they [2] please

a Eph.5.8. 1 or, more than. b Deut.18.14. 2 or, abound with.

(1.) That the tendency of the gospel is to promote the arts, and to produce the spirit of peace. (2.) It will dispose the nations to do right, and thus to avoid the occasions of war. (3.) It will fill the mind with horror at the scenes of cruelty and blood that war produces. (4.) It will diffuse honour around the arts of peace, and teach the nations to prize the endearments of home and country, and the sweet scenes of domestic life. (5.) Just so far as it has influence over princes and rulers, it will teach them to lay aside the passions of ambition and revenge, and the love of conquest and 'glory,' and indispose them to war. (6.) The tendency of things now is towards peace. The laws of nations have been established under the gospel. Difficulties can even now be adjusted by negotiation, and without a resort to arms. (7.) Wars are far less barbarous than they were formerly. The gospel has produced humanity, mildness, and some degree of justice even in war. It has put an end to the unmerciful treatment of prisoners; has prevented their being sold as slaves; has taught even belligerents not to murder women and children. (8.) Nothing remains to be done to make peace universal but to send the gospel abroad through every land. When that is done, the nations will be disposed to peace; and the prophet, therefore, has predicted the universal prevalence of peace *only* when all nations shall be brought under the influence of the gospel.

5. *O house of Jacob.* This is a direct address, or exhortation, of the prophet to the Jews. It is made in view of the fact that God had gracious purposes towards them. He intended to distinguish them by making them the source of blessings to all nations. As this was to be their high destiny, he exhorts them to devote themselves to him, and to live to his honour. The word *house* here means the *family*, or *nation*. The phrase is applied to the Jews because their tribes were descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. ¶ *Let us walk.* Let us *live*. The word *walk* is often used to denote human life or conduct; comp. ver. 3; Rom. vi. 4; viii. 1; 1 Cor. v. 7; Gal. vi. 16, &c. ¶ *In the light of the* LORD. The sense of this is: Let us obey the commandments of JEHOVAH; or, as the Chaldee expresses it, 'Let us walk in the doctrine of the law of the Lord.' The idea may be thus expressed: 'Let us not walk in the darkness and error of sin and idolatry, but in the light or instruction which God sheds upon us by his law. He teaches us what we should do, and let us obey him.' *Light* is often, in the Scriptures, thus put for instruction, or teaching; comp. Note, Matt. iv. 16; John i. 4; also, Eph. v. 8.

6. *Therefore.* The prophet proceeds in this and the following verses, to state the reasons of their calamities, and of the judgments that had come upon them. These judgments he traces to the crimes which he enumerates—crimes growing chiefly out of great commercial prosperity, producing pride, luxury, and idolatry. ¶ *Thou hast forsaken.* The address is changed from the exhortation to the house of Jacob (ver. 5) to God, as is frequently the case in the writings of Isaiah. It indicates a state where the mind is full of the subject, and where it expresses itself in a rapid and hurried manner. ¶ *Hast forsaken.* Hast withdrawn thy protection, and given them over to the calamities and judgments which had come upon them. ¶ *They be replenished.* Heb. They are *full*. That is, these things abound. ¶ *From the East.* Marg. *More than the East.* The meaning of the expression it is not easy to determine. The word translated *East*, קֶדֶם, denotes also *antiquity*, or that which is *of old*, as well as the East. Hence the LXX. render it, 'their land is, *as of old*, filled.' The Chaldee, 'their land is filled with idols *as at the*

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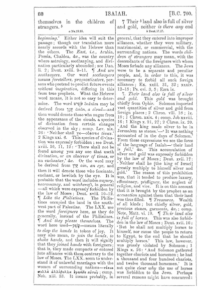

88 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

themselves in the children of strangers. [a]

7 Their [b] land also is full of silver and gold, neither *is there any* end

a Ps.13.33. b Deut.17.17.

beginning.' Either idea will suit the passage; though our translation more nearly accords with the Hebrew than the others. The *East*, i.e., Arabia, Persia, Chaldea, &c., was the country where astrology, soothsaying, and divination particularly abounded; see Dan. ii. 2; Deut. xviii. 9–11. ¶ *And are soothsayers.* Our word *soothsayers* means *foretellers, prognosticators*, persons who pretend to predict future events without *inspiration*, differing in this from true prophets. What the Hebrew word means, it is not so easy to determine. The word עֹנְנִים *ônănim* may be derived from עָנָן *ânân*, *a cloud*—and then would denote those who augur from the appearance of the clouds, a species of divination from certain changes observed in the sky; comp. Lev. xix. 26: 'Neither shall ye—*observe times*.' 2 Kings xxi. 6. This species of divination was expressly forbidden; see Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 12: 'There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or *an observer of times*, or an enchanter,' &c. Or the word may be derived from עַיִן *ain*, *an eye*, and then it will denote those who fascinate, enchant, or bewitch by the eye. It is probable that the word includes *augury, necromancy*, and *witchcraft*, in general—all which were expressly forbidden by the law of Moses; Deut. xviii. 10–12. ¶ *Like the Philistines.* The Philistines occupied the land in the south-west part of Palestine. The LXX. use the word *foreigners* here, as they do generally, instead of the Philistines. ¶ *And they please themselves.* The word here used—יַשְׂפִּיקוּ—means literally *to clap the hands* in token of joy. It may also mean, *to join the hands*, *to shake hands*, and then it will signify that they *joined hands* with foreigners; that is, they made compacts or entered into alliances with them contrary to the law of Moses. The LXX. seem to understand it of unlawful marriages with the women of surrounding nations—τέκνα πολλὰ ἀλλόφυλα ἐγενήθη αὐτοῖς; comp. Neh. xiii. 23. It means probably, in general, that they entered into improper alliances, whether they were military, matrimonial, or commercial, with the surrounding nations. The words *children of strangers* may mean, with the descendants of the foreigners with whom Moses forbade any alliances. The Jews were to be a separate and peculiar people, and, in order to this, it was necessary to forbid all such foreign alliances; Ex. xxiii. 31, 32; xxxiv. 12–15; Ps. cvi. 3, 5; Ezra ix.

7. *Their land also is full of silver and gold.* This *gold* was brought chiefly from Ophir. Solomon imported vast quantities of silver and gold from foreign places; 2 Chron. viii. 18; ix. 10; 1 Chron. xxix. 4; comp. *Job* xxviii. 16; 1 Kings x. 21, 27; 2 Chron. ix. 20. 'And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.'—'It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.' From these expressions we see the force of the language of Isaiah—'their land is *full*,' &c. This accumulation of silver and gold was expressly forbidden by the law of Moses; Deut. xvii. 17: 'Neither shall he [the king of Israel] greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.' The reason of this prohibition was, that it tended to produce luxury, effeminacy, profligacy, the neglect of religion, and vice. It is on this account that it is brought by the prophet as an *accusation* against them that their land was thus filled. ¶ *Treasures.* Wealth of all kinds; but chiefly silver, gold, precious stones, garments, &c.; comp. Note, Matt. vi. 19. ¶ *Their land also is full of horses.* This was also forbidden in the law of Moses; Deut. xvii. 16: 'But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses.' This law, however, was grossly violated by Solomon; 1 Kings x. 26: 'And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.' It is not quite clear *why* the use of horses was forbidden to the Jews. Perhaps several reasons might have concurred:

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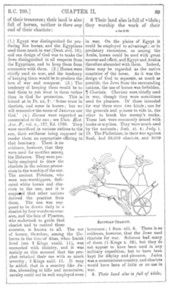

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of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither *is there any* end of their chariots:

8 Their land also is full of [a] idols; they worship the work of their

a Jer.2.28.

(1.) Egypt was distinguished for producing fine horses, and the Egyptians used them much in war (Deut. xvii. 16); and one design of God was to make the Jews distinguished in all respects from the Egyptians, and to keep them from commerce with them. (2.) Horses were chiefly used *in war*, and the tendency of keeping them would be to produce the love of war and conquest. (3.) The tendency of keeping them would be to lead them to put *trust* in them rather than in God for protection. This is hinted at in Ps. xx. 7: 'Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of JEHOVAH our God.' (4.) *Horses* were regarded as consecrated *to the sun*; see *Univ. Hist. Anc. P.*, vol. x., 177. Ed. 1780. They were sacrificed in various nations to the sun, their swiftness being supposed to render them an appropriate offering to that luminary. There is no evidence, however, that they were used for sacrifice among the Hebrews. They were probably employed to draw the chariots in the solemn processions in the worship of the sun. The ancient Persians, who were sun-worshippers, dedicated white horses and chariots to the sun, and it is supposed that other nations derived the practice from them. The sun was supposed to be drawn daily in a chariot by four wondrous coursers, and the fate of Phaeton, who undertook to guide that chariot and to control those coursers, is known to all. The use of horses, therefore, among the Hebrews in the time of Ahaz, when Isaiah lived (see 2 Kings xxiii. 11), was connected with idolatry, and it was mainly on this account that the prophet rebuked their use with so much severity; 2 Kings xxiii. 11. It may be added, that in a country like Judea, abounding in hills and mountains, cavalry could not be well employed even in war. On the plains of Egypt it could be employed to advantage; or in predatory excursions, as among the Arabs, horses could be used with great success and effect, and Egypt and Arabia therefore abounded with them. Indeed, these may be regarded as the native countries of the horse. As it was the design of God to separate, as much as possible, the Jews from the surrounding nations, the use of horses was forbidden. ¶ *Chariots.* *Chariots* were chiefly used in war, though they were sometimes used for pleasure. Of those intended for war there were two kinds; one for the generals and princes to ride in, the other to break the enemy's ranks. These last were commonly armed with hooks or scythes. They were much used by the ancients; Josh. xi. 4; Judg. i. 19. The Philistines, in their war against Saul, had 30,000 chariots, and 6000 horsemen; 1 Sam. xiii. 5. There is no evidence, however, that the Jews used chariots for war. Solomon had many of them (1 Kings x. 26), but they do not appear to have been used in any military expedition, but to have been kept for display and pleasure. Judea was a mountainous country, and chariots would have been of little or no use in war.

EGYPTIAN CHARIOT.

8. *Their land also is full of idols;*

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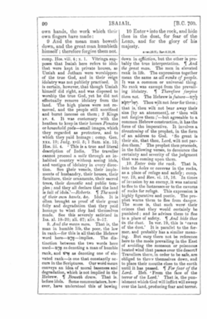

90 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

own hands, the work which their own fingers have made:

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

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

a ver.19.21; Rev.6.15,16.

comp. Hos. viii. 4; x. 1. Vitringa supposes that Isaiah here refers to idols that were kept in private houses, as Uzziah and Jotham were worshippers of the true God, and in their reign idolatry was not publicly practised. It is certain, however, that though Uzziah himself did right, and was disposed to worship the true God, yet he did not effectually remove idolatry from the land. The high places were not removed, and the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on them; 2 Kings xv. 4. It was customary with the heathen to keep in their houses *Penates* or *household gods*—small images, which they regarded as *protectors*, and to which they paid homage: comp. Gen. xxx. 19; Judg. xvii. 5; 1 Sam. xix. 13; Hos. iii. 4. 'This is a true and literal description of India. The traveller cannot proceed a *mile* through an inhabited country without seeing idols, and vestiges of idolatry in every direction. See their vessels, their implements of husbandry, their houses, their furniture, their ornaments, their sacred trees, their *domestic* and public temples; and they all declare that the land is full of idols.'—*Roberts.* ¶ *The work of their own hands,* &c. Idols. It is often brought as proof of their great folly and degradation that they paid homage to what *they* had themselves made. See this severely satirized in Isa. xl. 18–20; xli. 67; xliv. 9–17.

9. *And the mean man.* That is, the man in humble life, the poor, the low in rank—for this is all that the Hebrew word here—אָדָם—implies. The distinction between the two words here used—אָדָם as denoting a man of humble rank, and אִישׁ as denoting one of elevated rank—is one that constantly occurs in the Scriptures. Our word *mean* conveys an idea of moral baseness and degradation, which is not implied in the Hebrew. ¶ *Boweth down.* That is, before idols. Some commentators, however, have understood this of bowing down in *affliction,* but the other is probably the true interpretation. ¶ *And the great man.* The men in elevated rank in life. The expressions together mean the same as *all ranks of people.* It was a common or universal thing. No rank was exempt from the prevailing idolatry. ¶ *Therefore forgive them not.* The Hebrew is *future*—וְאַל־תִּשָּׂא לָהֶם. Thou wilt not *bear* for them; that is, thou wilt not bear away their sins [by an atonement], or 'thou wilt not forgive them;'—but agreeable to a common Hebrew construction, it has the force of the imperative. It involves a *threatening* of the prophet, in the form of an address to God. 'So great is their sin, that thou, Lord, wilt not pardon them.' The prophet then proceeds, in the following verses, to denounce the certainty and severity of the judgment that was coming upon them.

10. *Enter into the rock.* That is, into the *holes* or *caverns* in the rocks, as a place of refuge and safety; comp. ver. 19, and Rev. vi. 15, 16. In times of invasion by an enemy, it was natural to flee to the fastnesses or to the caverns of rocks for refuge. This expression is highly figurative and poetic. The prophet warns them to flee from danger. The sense is, that such were their crimes that they would certainly be punished; and he advises them to flee to a place of safety. ¶ *And hide thee in the dust.* In ver. 19, this is 'caves of the dust.' It is parallel to the former, and probably has a similar meaning. But may there not be reference here to the mode prevailing in the East of avoiding the monsoon or poisonous heated wind that passes over the desert? Travellers there, in order to be safe, are obliged to throw themselves down, and to place their mouths close to the earth until it has passed. ¶ *For fear of the Lord.* Heb. 'From the face of the terror of the Lord.' That is, the punishment which God will inflict will sweep over the land, producing fear and terror.

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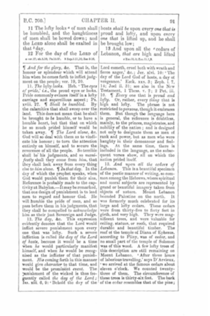

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER II. 91

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

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;

13 And upon all the [c] cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted

a ver.17; ch.5.15; Ps.18.27. b Zep.1.14,18; Mal.3.16. c Eze.31.3; Zec.11.1,2.

¶ *And for the glory,* &c. That is, the honour or splendour which will attend him when he comes forth to inflict judgment on the people; ver. 19, 20.

11. *The lofty looks.* Heb. 'The *eyes of pride,*' *i.e.,* the proud eyes or looks. Pride commonly evinces itself in a lofty carriage and supercilious aspect; Ps. xviii. 27. ¶ *Shall be humbled.* By the calamities that shall sweep over the land. This does not mean that he shall be brought *to be* humble, or to have a humble heart, but that that on which he so much prided himself would be taken away. ¶ *The Lord alone,* &c. God will so deal with them as to vindicate his honour; to turn the attention entirely on himself, and to secure the reverence of all the people. So terrible shall be his judgments, and so *manifestly* shall they come from *him,* that they shall look away from every thing else to *him* alone. ¶ *In that day.* In the day of which the prophet speaks, when God would punish them for their sins. Reference is probably made to the captivity at Babylon.—It may be remarked, that one design of punishment is to lead men to regard and honour God. He will humble the pride of men, and so pass before them in his judgments, that they shall be compelled to *acknowledge* him as their just Sovereign and Judge.

12. *The day,* &c. This expression evidently denotes that the Lord would inflict severe punishment upon every one that was lofty. Such a severe infliction is called *the day of the Lord of hosts,* because it would be a time when *he* would particularly manifest himself, and when *he* would be recognised as the inflicter of that punishment. *His* coming forth in this manner would give *character* to that time, and would be the prominent *event.* The punishment of the wicked is thus frequently called *the day of the Lord;* Isa. xiii. 6, 9: 'Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger,' &c.; Jer. xlvi. 10: 'The day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance.' Ezek. xxx. 3; Zeph. i. 7, 14; Joel ii. 31: see also in the New Testament, 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10. ¶ *Every one that is proud and lofty.* Or, rather, every *thing* that is high and lofty. The phrase is not restricted to *persons,* though it embraces them. But though the language here is general, the reference is doubtless, mainly, to the princes, magistrates, and nobility of the nation; and is designed not only to designate them as men of rank and power, but as men who were haughty in their demeanour and feelings. At the same time, there is included in the language, as the subsequent verses show, all on which the nation prided itself.

13. *And upon all the cedars of Lebanon.* This is a beautiful specimen of the poetic manner of writing, so common among the Hebrews, where spiritual and moral subjects are represented by grand or beautiful imagery taken from objects of nature. Mount Lebanon bounded Palestine on the north. It was formerly much celebrated for its large and lofty cedars. These cedars were from thirty-five to forty feet in girth, and very high. They were magnificent trees, and were valuable for ceiling, statues, or roofs, that required durable and beautiful timber. The roof of the temple of Diana of Ephesus, according to Pliny, was of cedar, and no small part of the temple of Solomon was of this wood. A few lofty trees of this description are still remaining on Mount Lebanon. 'After three hours of laborious travelling,' says D'Arvieux, 'we arrived at the famous cedars about eleven o'clock. We counted twenty-three of them. The circumference of these trees is thirty-six feet. The bark of the cedar resembles that of the pine;

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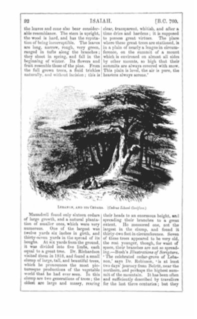

92 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

the leaves and cone also bear considerable resemblance. The stem is upright, the wood is hard, and has the reputation of being incorruptible. The leaves are long, narrow, rough, very green, ranged in tufts along the branches; they shoot in spring, and fall in the beginning of winter. Its flowers and fruit resemble those of the pine. From the full grown trees, a fluid trickles naturally, and without incision; this is clear, transparent, whitish, and after a time dries and hardens; it is supposed to possess great virtues. The place where these great trees are stationed, is in a plain of nearly a league in circumference, on the summit of a mount which is environed on almost all sides by other mounts, so high that their summits are always covered with snow. This plain is level, the air is pure, the heavens always serene.'

LEBANON, AND ITS CEDARS. (*Cedrus Libani Conifera.*)

Maundrell found only sixteen cedars of large growth, and a natural plantation of smaller ones, which were very numerous. One of the largest was twelve yards six inches in girth, and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs. At six yards from the ground, it was divided into five limbs, each equal to a great tree. Dr. Richardson visited them in 1818, and found a small clump of large, tall, and beautiful trees, which he pronounces the most picturesque productions of the vegetable world that he had ever seen. In this clump are two generations of trees; the oldest are large and massy, rearing their heads to an enormous height, and spreading their branches to a great extent. He measured one, not the largest in the clump, and found it thirty-two feet in circumference. Seven of these trees appeared to be very old, the rest younger, though, for want of space, their branches are not so spreading.—Bush's *Illustrations of Scripture.* 'The celebrated cedar-grove of Lebanon,' says Dr. Robinson, 'is at least two days' journey from Beirût, near the northern, and perhaps the highest summit of the mountain. It has been often and sufficiently described by travellers for the last three centuries; but they

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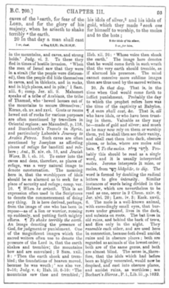

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER III. 95

caves of the [1]earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly [a] the earth.

20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver,[2] and his idols of gold, which they made [3]each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

[1] or, dust. [a] Hag.2.6,21; He.12.26,27.

[2] the idols of his silver.

[3] or, for him.

in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.' Judg. vi. 2. To these they fled in times of hostile invasion. 'When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits;' 1 Sam. xiii. 6; comp. Jer. xli. 9. Mahomet speaks of a tribe of Arabians, the tribe of Thamud, who 'hewed houses out of the mountains to secure themselves;' Koran, ch. xv. and xxvi. Grots or rooms hewed out of rocks for various purposes are often mentioned by travellers in Oriental regions; see Maundrell, p. 118, and Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, and particularly Laborde's *Journey to Arabia Petrea*. Such caves are often mentioned by Josephus as affording places of refuge for banditti and robbers; *Ant.*, B. xiv. ch. 15, and *Jewish Wars*, B. i. ch. 16. To enter into the caves and dens, therefore, as places of refuge, was a very natural image to denote consternation. The meaning here is, that the worshippers of idols should be so alarmed as to seek for a place of security and refuge; comp. ver. 10. ¶ *When he ariseth.* This is an expression often used in the Scriptures to denote the commencement of doing any thing. It is here derived, perhaps, from the image of one who has been in repose—as of a lion or warrior, rousing up suddenly, and putting forth mighty efforts. ¶ *To shake terribly the earth.* An image denoting the presence of God, for judgment or punishment. One of the magnificent images which the sacred writers often use to denote the presence of the Lord is, that the earth shakes and trembles; the mountains bow and are convulsed; 2 Sam. xxii. 8: 'Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved, because he was wroth;' see also ver. 9-16; Judg. v. 4; Hab. iii. 6-10: 'The mountains saw thee and trembled;' Heb. xii. 26: 'Whose voice then shook the earth.' The image here denotes that he would come forth in such wrath that the very earth should tremble, as if alarmed his presence. The mind cannot conceive more sublime images than are thus used by the sacred writers.

20. *In that day.* That is, in the time when God would come forth to inflict punishment. Probably the day to which the prophet refers here was the time of the captivity at Babylon. ¶ *A man shall cast,* &c. That is, *all* who have idols, or who have been trusting in them. Valuable as they may be—made of gold and silver; and much as he may *now* rely on them or worship them, yet he shall then see their vanity, and shall cast them into dark, obscure places, or holes, where are moles and bats. ¶ *To the moles.* לַחְפֹּר פֵּרוֹת. Probably this should be read as a single word, and it is usually interpreted *moles.* Jerome interprets it mice, or moles, from חָפַר *hhâphăr, to dig.* The word is formed by doubling the radical letters to give *intensity.* Similar instances of words being divided in the Hebrew, which are nevertheless to be read as one, occur in 2 Chron. xxiv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 20; Lam. iv. 3; Ezek. xxvii. 6. The mole is a well-known animal, with exceedingly small eyes, that burrows under ground, lives in the dark, and subsists on roots. The bat lives in old ruins, and behind the bark of trees, and flies only in the night. They *resemble* each other, and are used here in connection, because both dwell amidst ruins and in obscure places; both are regarded as animals of the lowest order; both are of the same genus, and both are almost blind. The sense is, therefore, that the idols which had before been so highly venerated, would now be despised, and cast into obscure places, and amidst ruins, as worthless; see Bochart's *Hieroz.*, P. i., Lib. iii., p. 1032.

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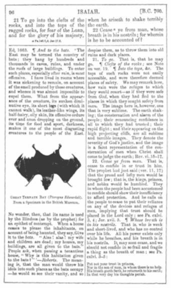

96 ISAIAH. [B.C. 700.

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.

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

[a] Ps.146.3,4; Jer.17.5.

Ed, 1663. ¶ *And to the bats.* 'The East may be termed the country of bats; they hang by hundreds and thousands in caves, ruins, and under the roofs of large buildings. To enter such places, especially after rain, is most offensive. I have lived in rooms where it was sickening to remain, on account of the smell produced by those creatures, and whence it was almost impossible to expel them. What from the appearance of the creature, its sunken diminutive eye, its short legs (with which it cannot walk), its leather-like wings, its half-hairy, oily skin, its offensive ordure ever and anon dropping on the ground, its time for food and sport, darkness, makes it one of the most disgusting creatures to the people of the East.

GREAT TERNATE BAT (*Pteropus Edwardsii*). From a Specimen in the British Museum.

No wonder, then, that its name is used by the Hindoos (as by the prophet) for an epithet of contempt. When a house ceases to please the inhabitants, on account of being haunted, they say, Give it to the *bats.* "Alas! alas! my wife and children are dead; my houses, my buildings, are all given to the bats." People ask, when passing a tenantless house, "Why is this habitation given to the bats?"'—*Roberts.* The meaning is, that the man would throw his idols into such places as the bats occupy—he would so see their vanity, and so despise them, as to throw them into old ruins and dark places.

21. *To go.* That is, that he may go. ¶ *Clefts of the rocks;* see Note on ver. 19. ¶ *Into the tops,* &c. The tops of such rocks were not easily accessible, and were therefore deemed places of safety. We may remark here, how vain were the refuges to which they would resort—as if they were safe from *God,* when they had fled to the places in which they sought safety from man. The image here is, however, one that is very sublime. The earth shaking; the consternation and alarm of the people; their renouncing confidence in all to which they had trusted; their rapid flight; and their appearing on the high projecting cliffs, are all sublime and terrible images. They denote the severity of God's justice, and the image is a faint representation of the consternation of men when Christ shall come to judge the earth; Rev. vi. 15-17.

22. *Cease ye from man.* That is, cease to confide in or trust in him. The prophet had just said (ver. 11, 17) that the proud and lofty men would be brought low; that is, the kings, princes, and nobles would be humbled. They in whom the people had been accustomed to confide should show their insufficiency to afford protection. And he calls on the people to cease to put their reliance on any of the devices and refuges of men, implying that trust should be placed in the Lord only; see Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4; Jer. xvii. 5. ¶ *Whose breath is in his nostrils.* That is, who is weak and short-lived, and who has no control over his life. All his power exists only while he breathes, and his breath is in his nostrils. It may soon cease, and we should not confide in so frail and fragile a thing as the breath of man; see Ps. cxlvi. 3-5:

Put not your trust in princes,
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth;
In that very day his thoughts perish.

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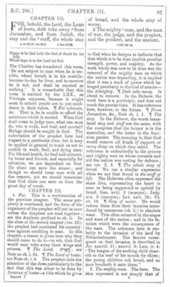

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER III. 97

CHAPTER III.

FOR, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away [a] from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the [b] staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water.

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

[a] ch.36.12; Jer.38.2. [b] Lev.26.26.

[c] 2Ki.24.14.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope is in the Lord his God.

The Chaldee has translated this verse, 'Be not subject to man when he is terrible, whose breath is in his nostrils; because to-day he lives, and to-morrow he is not, and shall be reputed as nothing.' It is remarkable that this verse is omitted by the LXX., as Vitringa supposes, because it might seem to exhort people not to put confidence in their rulers. ¶ *For wherein,* &c. That is, he is unable to afford the assistance which is needed. When God shall come to judge men, what can man do, who is weak, and frail, and mortal? Refuge should be sought in God. The exhortation of the prophet here had respect to a particular time, but it may be applied in general to teach us not to confide in weak, frail, and dying man. For life and health, for food and raiment, for home and friends, and especially for salvation, we are dependent on God. He alone can save the sinner; and though we should treat men with all due respect, yet we should remember that God alone can save us from the great day of wrath.

CHAPTER III.

1. *For.* This is a continuation of the previous chapter. The same prophecy is continued, and the force of the argument of the prophet will not be seen unless the chapters are read together; see the Analysis prefixed to ch. ii. In the close of the second chapter (ver. 22), the prophet had cautioned his countrymen against confiding in man. In this chapter, a reason is given here why they should cease to do it—to wit, that God would soon take away their kings and princes. ¶ *The Lord.* הָאָדוֹן; see Note on ch. i. 24. ¶ *The Lord of hosts;* see Note ch. i. 9. The prophet calls the attention of the Jews particularly to the fact that this was about to be done by JEHOVAH *of hosts*—a title which he gives to God when he designs to indicate that that which is to be done implies peculiar strength, power, and majesty. As the work which was now to be done was the removal of the mighty men on which the nation was depending, it is implied that it was a work of power which belonged peculiarly to the God of armies—the Almighty. ¶ *Doth take away.* Is about to remove. In the Hebrew, the word here is a *participle,* and does not mark the precise time. It has reference here, however, to the future. ¶ *From Jerusalem,* &c., Note ch. i. 1. ¶ *The stay.* In the Hebrew, the words translated *stay* and *staff* are the same, with the exception that the former is in the masculine, and the latter in the feminine gender. The meaning is, that God would remove *all kinds of support, or every thing* on which they relied. The reference is undoubtedly to the princes and mighty men on whose counsels and aid the nation was resting for defence; see ver. 2, 3. ¶ *The whole stay of bread.* We use a similar expression when we say that *bread is the staff of life.* The Hebrews often expressed the same idea, representing the *heart* in man as being *supported* or *upheld* by bread, Gen. xviii. 5 (*margin*); Judg. xix. 5 (*margin*); Lev. xxvi. 26; Ps. cv. 16. ¶ *Stay of water.* He would reduce them from their luxuries introduced by commerce (ch. ii.) to absolute want. This often occurred in the sieges and wars of the nation; and in the famines which were the consequence of the wars. The reference here is probably to the invasion of the land by Nebuchadnezzar. The famine consequent on that invasion is described in Jer. xxxviii. 21; xxxviii. 9; Lam. iv. 4: 'The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.'

2. *The mighty man.* The hero. The idea expressed is not simply that of

ISAIAH I. 7

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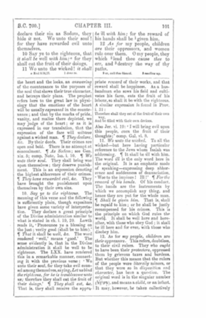

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER III. 101

declare their sin as Sodom, they hide *it* not. Wo unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

10 Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be* well *with him:*[a] for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11 Wo unto the wicked! *it shall be* ill *with him;* for the reward of his hands shall be [1] given him.

12 *As for* my people, children *are* their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which [2] lead thee cause *thee* to err, and [3] destroy the way of thy paths.

a Eccl.8.12,13. 1 done to. 2 or, call thee blessed. 3 swallow up.

the heart and the looks, an *answering* of the countenance to the purposes of the soul that shows their true character, and betrays their plans. The prophet refers here to the great law in physiology that the emotions of the heart will be usually *expressed* in the countenance; and that by the marks of pride, vanity, and malice there depicted, we may judge of the heart; or as it is expressed in our translation, that the expression of the face will *witness* against a wicked man. ¶ *They declare, &c.* By their deeds. Their crimes are open and bold. There is no attempt at concealment. ¶ *As Sodom;* see Gen. xix. 5; comp. Note, Isa. i. 10. ¶ *Wo unto their soul.* They shall bring woe upon themselves; they deserve punishment. This is an expression denoting the highest abhorrence of their crimes. ¶ *They have rewarded evil, &c.* They have brought the punishment upon themselves by their own sins.

10. *Say ye to the righteous.* The meaning of this verse and the following is sufficiently plain, though expositors have given some variety of interpretation. They declare a great principle of the Divine administration similar to what is stated in ch. i. 19, 20. Lowth reads it, 'Pronounce ye a blessing on the just; verily good (shall be to him).' ¶ *That* it shall be *well, &c.* The word rendered 'well,' means 'good.' The sense evidently is, that in the Divine administration it shall be well to be righteous. The LXX. have rendered this in a remarkable manner, connecting it with the previous verse: 'Wo unto their soul, for they take evil counsel among themselves, saying, *Let us bind the righteous, for he is troublesome unto us;* therefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.' ¶ *They shall eat, &c.* That is, they shall receive the appropriate *reward* of their works, and that reward shall be happiness. As a husbandman who sows his field and cultivates his farm, eats the fruit of his labour, so shall it be with the righteous. A similar expression is found in Prov. i. 31:

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,
And be filled with their own devices.

Also Jer. vi. 19: 'I will bring evil upon this people, *even* the fruit of their thoughts;' comp. Gal. vi. 8.

11. *Wo unto the wicked.* To all the wicked—but here having particular reference to the Jews whom Isaiah was addressing. ¶ It shall be *ill* with him. The word *ill* is the only word here in the original. It is an emphatic mode of speaking—expressing deep abhorrence and suddenness of denunciation. 'Woe to the impious! Ill!' ¶ *For the reward of his hands.* Of his conduct. The hands are the instruments by which we accomplish any thing, and hence they are put for the whole man. ¶ *Shall be given him.* That is, shall be repaid to him; or he shall be justly recompensed for his crimes. This is the principle on which God rules the world. It shall be well here and hereafter, with those who obey God; it shall be ill here and for ever, with those who disobey him.

12. As for *my people, children* are *their oppressors.* This refers, doubtless, to their civil rulers. They who *ought* to have been their *protectors,* oppressed them by grievous taxes and burdens. But whether this means that the rulers of the people were *literally* minors, or that they were so in *disposition* and *character,* has been a question. The original word is in the singular number ([illegible]), and means a *child,* or an infant. It may, however, be taken collectively

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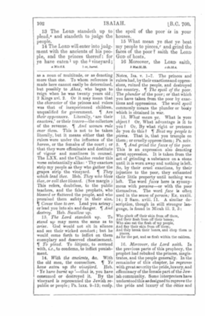

102 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

13 The LORD standeth up to plead,[a] and standeth to judge the people.

14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten [1] up the [b] vineyard; the spoil of the poor *is* in your houses.

15 What mean ye *that* ye beat my people to pieces,[c] and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

16 Moreover, the LORD saith,

a Mic.6.2. 1 or, burnt. b Mat.21.33. c ch.58.4.

as a noun of multitude, or as denoting more than one. To whom reference is made here cannot easily be determined, but possibly to *Ahaz,* who began to reign when he was twenty years old; 2 Kings xvi. 2. Or it may mean that the *character* of the princes and rulers was that of inexperienced children, unqualified for government. ¶ *Are their oppressors.* Literally, 'are their *exactors,*' or their *taxers*—the collectors of the revenue. ¶ *And women rule over them.* This is not to be taken literally, but it means either that the rulers were under the influence of the *harem,* or the females of the court; or that they were effeminate and destitute of vigour and manliness in counsel. The LXX. and the Chaldee render this verse substantially alike: 'Thy exactors strip my people as they who gather the grapes strip the vineyard. ¶ *They which lead thee.* Heb. *They who bless thee, or call thee blessed.* (See margin.) This refers, doubtless, to the public teachers, and the false prophets, who *blessed* or flattered the people, and who promised them safety in their sins. ¶ *Cause* thee *to err.* Lead you astray; or lead you into sin and danger. ¶ *And destroy.* Heb. *Swallow up.*

13. *The Lord standeth up.* To *stand up* may mean the same as to *arise.* God would not sit in silence and see their wicked conduct; but he would come forth to inflict on them exemplary and deserved chastisement. ¶ *To plead.* To *litigate,* to contend with, *i.e.,* to condemn, to inflict punishment.

14. *With the ancients, &c.* With the old men, the counsellors. ¶ *Ye have eaten up the vineyard.* Heb. 'Ye have *burnt up*'—that is, you have consumed or destroyed it. By the vineyard is represented the Jewish republic or people; Ps. lxxx. 9–13; comp. Notes, Isa. v. 1–7. The princes and rulers had, by their exactions and oppressions, ruined the people, and destroyed the country. ¶ *The spoil of the poor.* The *plunder* of the poor; or that which you have taken from the poor by exactions and oppressions. The word *spoil* commonly means the plunder or booty which is obtained in war.

15. *What mean ye.* What is your object? Or, What advantage is it to you? Or, By what right or pretence do you do this? ¶ *Beat my people to pieces.* That is, that you trample on them; or cruelly oppress them; Ps. xciv. 5. ¶ *And grind the faces of the poor.* This is an expression also denoting great oppression. It is taken from the act of grinding a substance on a stone until it is worn away and nothing is left. So, by their cruel exactions, by their injustice to the poor, they exhausted their little property until nothing was left. The word *faces* here is synonymous with *persons*—or with the poor themselves. The word *face* is often used in the sense of *person;* Ex. xxxiii. 14; 2 Sam. xviii. 11. A similar description, though in still stronger language, is found in Micah iii. 2, 3:

Who pluck off their skin from off them,
And their flesh from off their bones;
Who also eat the flesh of my people,
And flay their skin from off them;
And they break their bones, and chop them in pieces,
As for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

16. *Moreover, the Lord saith.* In the previous parts of this prophecy, the prophet had rebuked the princes, magistrates, and the people generally. In the remainder of this chapter, he reproves with great severity the pride, luxury, and effeminacy of the female part of the Jewish community. Some interpreters have understood this as designed to reprove the the pride and luxury of the *cities* and

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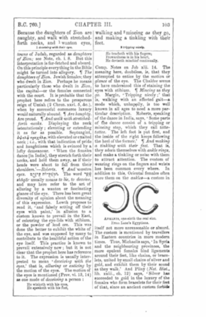

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER III. 103

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks, and [1] wanton eyes, walking and [2] mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.

1 deceiving with their eyes. 2 tripping nicely.

towns of Judah, regarded as *daughters of Zion;* see Note, ch. i. 8. But this interpretation is far-fetched and absurd. On this principle every thing in the Bible might be turned into allegory. ¶ *The daughters of Zion.* Jewish females; they who dwelt in Zion. Perhaps he means particularly those who dwelt in *Zion,* the capital—or the females connected with the court. It is probable that the prophet here refers to the prosperous reign of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 5, &c.), when by successful commerce luxury would naturally abound. ¶ *Are haughty.* Are proud. ¶ *And walk with stretched-forth necks.* Displaying the neck ostentatiously; elevating or extending it as far as possible. Septuagint, ὑψηλῷ τραχήλῳ, with elevated or exalted neck; *i.e.,* with that indication of pride and haughtiness which is evinced by a lofty demeanour. 'When the females dance [in India], they stretch forth their necks, and hold them away, as if their heads were about to fall from their shoulders.'—*Roberts.* ¶ *And wanton eyes.* [illegible]. The word [illegible] *shâqăr* usually means *to lie, to deceive,* and may here refer to the art of alluring by a wanton or fascinating glance of the eye. There has been great diversity of opinion about the meaning of this expression. Lowth proposes to read it, 'and falsely setting off their eyes with paint,' in allusion to a custom known to prevail in the East, of colouring the eye-lids with stibium, or the powder of lead ore. This was done the better to exhibit the white of the eye, and was supposed by many to contribute to the healthful action of the eye itself. This practice is known to prevail extensively now; but it is not clear that the prophet here has reference to it. The expression is usually interpreted to mean '*deceiving with the eyes,*' that is, *alluring* or *enticing* by the motion of the eyes. The motion of the eyes is mentioned (Prov. vi. 13, 14) as one mode of *deceiving* a person:

He winketh with his eyes,
He speaketh with his feet,
He teacheth with his fingers;
Frowardness is in his heart,
He deviseth mischief continually.

Comp. Notes on Job xiii. 14. The meaning here, doubtless, is, that they attempted to entice by the *motion* or *glance* of the eye. The Chaldee seems to have understood this of staining the eyes with stibium. ¶ *Mincing as they go.* Margin, '*Tripping nicely;*' that is, walking with an affected gait—a mode which, unhappily, is too well known in all ages to need a more particular description. Roberts, speaking of the dance in India, says, 'Some parts of the dance consist of a tripping or mincing step, which they call *tatte-tattee.* The left foot is put first, and the inside of the right keeps following the heel of the former.' ¶ *And making a tinkling with their feet.* That is, they adorn themselves with *ankle rings,* and make a tinkling or noise with them to attract attention. The custom of wearing rings on the fingers and wrists has been common every where. In addition to this, Oriental females often wore them on the *ankles*—a custom in itself not more unreasonable or absurd. The custom is mentioned by travellers in Eastern countries in more modern times. Thus, Michaelis says, 'In Syria and the neighbouring provinces, the more opulent females bind ligaments around their feet, like chains, or bracelets, united by small chains of silver and gold, and exhibit them by their sound as they walk.' And Pliny (*Nat. Hist.,* lib. xxxiii., ch. 12) says, 'Silver has succeeded to gold in the luxury of the females who form bracelets for their feet of that, since an ancient custom forbids

ANKLETS, one-sixth the real size.
From Lane's Egyptians.

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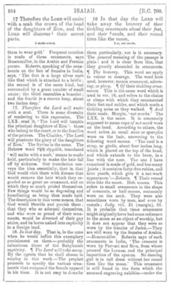

104 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

17 Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover[1] their secret parts.

18 In that day the LORD will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet,* and *their* [2]cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon,

[1] make naked.

[2] or, net-works.

them to wear gold.' Frequent mention is made of these ornaments, says Rosenmüller, in the Arabic and Persian poems. Roberts, speaking of the ornaments on the feet of females in India, says, 'The first is a large silver curb like that which is attached to a bridle; the second is of the same kind, but surrounded by a great number of small BELLS; the third resembles a bracelet; and the fourth is a convex hoop, about two inches deep.'

17. *Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab.* There is some diversity of rendering to this expression. The LXX. read it, 'The Lord will humble the principal daughters of Zion'—those who belong to the court, or to the families of the princes. The Chaldee, 'The Lord will prostrate the glory of the daughters of Zion.' The Syriac is the same. The Hebrew word שִׂפַּח *sippâh*, translated 'will smite with a scab,' means to *make bald*, particularly to make the hair fall off by sickness. Our translation conveys the idea essentially, that is, that God would visit them with disease that would remove the hair which they regarded as so great an ornament, and on which they so much prided themselves. Few things would be so degrading and humiliating as being thus made bald. The description in this verse means, that God would humble and punish them; that they who so adorned themselves, and who were so proud of their ornaments, would be divested of their gay attire, and be borne naked into captivity in a foreign land.

18. *In that day.* That is, in the time when he would inflict this exemplary punishment on them—probably the calamitous times of the Babylonish captivity. ¶ *The Lord will take away.* By the agents that he shall choose to employ in this work.—The prophet proceeds to specify the various ornaments that composed the female apparel in his time. It is not easy to describe them particularly, nor is it necessary. The *general* meaning of the passage is plain: and it is clear from this, that they greatly abounded in ornaments. ¶ *The bravery.* This word we apply to valour or courage. The word here used, however, means *ornament, adorning,* or *glory.* ¶ *Of their tinkling ornaments.* This is the same word which is used in ver. 16, and refers to the chains or clasps with which they ornamented their feet and ankles, and which made a tinkling noise as they walked. ¶ *And their cauls.* Margin, '*net-works.*' The LXX. is the same. It is commonly supposed to mean *caps of net-work* worn on the head. According to others, the word refers to small *suns* or *spangles* worn on the hair, answering to the following word *moons.* 'The caul is a strap, or girdle, about four inches long, which is placed on the top of the head, and which extends to the brow, in a line with the nose. The one I have examined is made of gold, and has many joints; it contains forty-five rubies, and nine pearls, which give it a net-work appearance.'—*Roberts.* ¶ *Their round tires like the moon.* Heb. *moons.* This refers to small ornaments in the shape of crescents, or half-moons, commonly worn on the neck. They were also sometimes worn by men, and even by camels; Judg. viii. 21 (margin), 26. It is probable that these ornaments might originally have had some reference to the moon as an object of worship, but it does not appear that they were so worn by the females of Judea.—They are still worn by the females of Arabia. —*Rosenmüller.* Roberts says of such ornaments in India, 'The crescent is worn by Parvati and Siva, from whom proceed the LINGAM, and the principal impurities of the system. No dancing girl is in full dress without her round tires like the moon.' This ornament is still found in the form which the annexed engraving exhibits—under the

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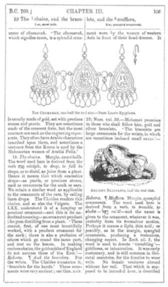

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER III. 105

19 The [1]chains, and the bracelets, and the [2]mufflers,

[1] or, sweet balls.

[2] or, spangled ornaments.

name of *chumarah.* 'The *chumarah,* which signifies moon, is a splendid ornament worn by the women of western Asia in front of their head-dresses. It

THE CHUMARAH, one-half the real size.—From Lane's Egyptians.

is usually made of gold, set with precious stones and pearls. They are sometimes made of the crescent form, but the most common are such as the engraving represents. They often have Arabic characters inscribed upon them, and sometimes a sentence from the Koran is used by the Mahometan women of Arabia Felix.'

19. *The chains.* Margin, *sweet balls.* The word used here is derived from the verb נָטַף *nâtăph, to drop, to fall in drops, or to distil,* as juice from a plant. Hence it means that which *resembles drops*—as pearls, or precious stones, used as ornaments for the neck or ears. We retain a similar word as applicable to the ornaments of the ears, by calling them *drops.* The Chaldee renders this *chains,* and so also the Vulgate. The LXX. understand it of a *hanging* or *pendant* ornament—and this is its undoubted meaning—an ornament pendant like gum distilling from a plant. 'These consist, first, of one most beautifully worked, with a pendant ornament for the neck; there is also a profusion of others which go round the same part, and rest on the bosom. In making curious chains, the goldsmiths of England do not surpass those of the East.'—*Roberts.* ¶ *And the bracelets.* For the wrists. The Chaldee translates it, 'bracelets for the hands.' These ornaments were very ancient; see Gen. xxiv. 22; Num. xxi. 50.—Mahomet promises to those who shall follow him, gold and silver bracelets. 'The bracelets are large ornaments for the wrists, in which are sometimes inclosed small BELLS.'—

ANCIENT BRACELETS, half the real size.

Roberts. ¶ *Mufflers.* Margin, *spangled ornaments.* The word used here is derived from a verb, *to tremble, to shake*—רָעַל *râ'ăl*—and the name is given to the ornament, whatever it was, probably from its *tremulous* motion. Perhaps it means *a light, thin veil;* or possibly, as in the margin, spangled ornaments, producing a tremulous, changing aspect. In Zech. xii. 2, the word is used to denote 'trembling'—giddiness, or intoxication. It was early customary, and is still common in Oriental countries, for the females to wear veils. No female ventures abroad without her veil. That which is supposed to be intended here, is described

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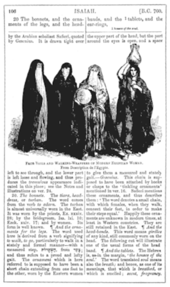

106 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the [1]tablets, and the ear-rings,

[1] houses of the soul.

by the Arabian scholiast Saferi, quoted by Gesenius. It is drawn tight over the upper part of the head, but the part around the eyes is open, and a space

FACE-VEILS AND WALKING-WRAPPERS OF MODERN EGYPTIAN WOMEN. From Description de l'Egypte.

left to see through, and the lower part is left loose and flowing, and thus produces the *tremulous* appearance indicated in this place; see the Notes and Illustrations on ver. 24.

20. *The bonnets.* The *tiara, head-dress,* or *turban.* The word comes from the verb *to adorn.* The *turban* is almost universally worn in the East. It was worn by the priests, Ex. xxxix. 28; by the bridegroom, Isa. lxi. 10; Ezek. xxiv. 17; and by women. Its form is well known. ¶ *And the ornaments for the legs.* The word used here is derived from a verb signifying *to walk, to go,* particularly to walk in a stately and formal manner—with a measured step, צְעָדָה, from צָעַד; and thus refers to a proud and lofty gait. The *ornament* which is here referred to is supposed to have been a short chain extending from one foot to the other, worn by the Eastern women to give them a measured and stately gait.—*Gesenius.* This *chain* is supposed to have been attached by hooks or clasps to the 'tinkling ornaments' mentioned in ver. 16. Saferi mentions these ornaments, and thus describes them: 'The word denotes a small chain, with which females, when they walk, connect their feet, in order to make their steps equal.' Happily these ornaments are unknown in modern times, at least in Western countries. They are still retained in the East. ¶ *And the head-bands.* This word means *girdles* of any kind, still commonly worn on the head. The following cut will illustrate one of the usual forms of the head band. ¶ *And the tablets.* The Hebrew is, as in the margin, '*the houses of the soul.*' The word translated *soul* means also the *breath;* and hence, as one of its meanings, that which is *breathed,* or which is smelled; *scent, fragrancy.*

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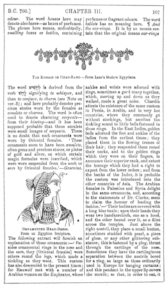

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER III. 107

odour. The word *houses* here may denote also *boxes*—as boxes of perfumes. The phrase here means, undoubtedly, *smelling boxes or bottles*, containing perfumes or fragrant odours. The word *tablets* has no meaning here. ¶ *And the ear-rings*. It is by no means certain that the original means *ear-rings*

THE KUSSAH OR HEAD-BAND.—From Lane's Modern Egyptians.

The word לְחָשִׁים is derived from the verb לָחַשׁ signifying *to whisper*, and then *to conjure, to charm* (see Note on ver. 3); and here probably denotes precious stones worn by the females as *amulets or charms*. The word is often used to denote charming *serpents*—from their *hissing*—and it has been supposed probable that these amulets were small images of serpents. There is no doubt that such ornaments were worn by Oriental females. 'These ornaments seem to have been *amulets*, often gems and precious stones, or plates of gold and silver, on which certain magic formulas were inscribed, which were worn suspended from the neck or ears by Oriental females.'—*Gesenius*.

ORNAMENTED HEAD-DRESS. From an Egyptian Sculpture.

The following extract will furnish an explanation of these ornaments:—'Besides ornamental rings in the nose and the ears, they [Oriental females] wore others round the legs, which made a tinkling as they went. This custom has also descended to the present times; for Rauwolf met with a number of Arabian women on the Euphrates, whose ankles and wrists were adorned with rings, sometimes a good many together, which, moving up and down as they walked, made a great noise. Chardin attests the existence of the same custom in Persia, in Arabia, and in very hot countries, where they commonly go without stockings, but ascribes the tinkling sound to little bells fastened to those rings. In the East Indies, golden bells adorned the feet and ankles of the ladies from the earliest times; they placed them in the flowing tresses of their hair; they suspended them round their necks, and to the golden rings which they wore on their fingers, to announce their superior rank, and extort the homage which they had a right to expect from the lower orders; and from the banks of the Indus, it is probable the custom was introduced into the other countries of Asia. The Arabian females in Palestine and Syria delight in the same ornaments, and, according to the statements of Dr. Clarke, seem to claim the honour of leading the fashion.'—'Their bodies are covered with a long blue tunic; upon their heads they wear two handkerchiefs, one as a hood, and the other bound over it, as a fillet across the temples. Just above the right nostril, they place a small button, sometimes studded with pearl, a piece of glass, or any other glittering substance; this is fastened by a plug, thrust through the cartilage of the nose. Sometimes they have the cartilaginous separation between the nostrils bored for a ring, as large as those ordinarily used in Europe for hanging curtains; and this pendant in the upper lip covers the mouth; so that, in order to eat, it

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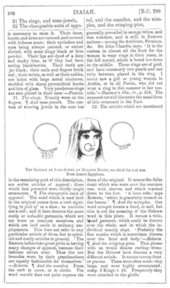

108 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760

21 The rings, and nose-jewels,
22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins,

is necessary to raise it. Their faces, hands, and arms are tatooed, and covered with hideous scars; their eyelashes and eyes being always painted, or rather dirtied, with some dingy black or blue powder. Their lips are dyed of a deep and dusky blue, as 'if they had been eating blackberries. Their teeth are jet black; their nails and fingers brick red; their wrists, as well as their ankles, are laden with large metal cinctures, studded with sharp pyramidical knobs and bits of glass. Very ponderous rings are also placed in their ears.'—*Paxton*.

21. *The rings*. Usually worn on the fingers. ¶ *And nose-jewels*. The custom of wearing jewels in the *nose* has generally prevailed in savage tribes, and was common, and is still, in Eastern nations—among the Arabians, Persians, &c. Sir John Chardin says, 'It is the custom in almost all the East for the women to wear rings in their noses, in the left nostril, which is bored low down in the middle. These rings are of gold, and have commonly two pearls and one ruby between, placed in the ring. I never saw a girl or young woman in Arabia, or in all Persia, who did not wear a ring in this manner in her nostrils.'—Harmer's *Obs.*, iv., p. 318. The annexed cut will illustrate the usual form of this ornament in the East.

22. The articles which are mentioned

THE KHIZAM OR NOSE-JEWEL OF MODERN EGYPT, one-third the real size. From Lane's Egyptians.

in the remaining part of this description, are entire articles of apparel; those which had preceded were chiefly single ornaments. ¶ *The changeable suits of apparel*. The word which is used here in the original comes from a verb signifying *to pull off* as a shoe; to unclothe one's-self; and it here denotes the more *costly or valuable* garments, which are not worn on common occasions, and which are *laid aside* in ordinary employments. This does not refer to any *particular article of dress*, but to splendid and costly articles in general. 'The Eastern ladies take great pride in having many changes of apparel, because their fashions NEVER alter. Thus the net brocades worn by their grandmothers are equally fashionable for themselves.'—*Roberts*. ¶ *And the mantles*. From the verb *to cover*, or *to clothe*. The word *mantle* does not quite express the force of the original. It means the fuller *tunic* which was worn over the common one, with sleeves, and which reached down to the feet. 'A loose robe,' says Roberts, 'which is gracefully crossed on the bosom.' ¶ *And the wimples*. Our word *wimple* means a *hood*, or *veil*, but this is not the meaning of the Hebrew word in this place. It means a wide, broad garment, which could be thrown over the whole, and in which the individual usually slept. 'Probably the fine muslin which is sometimes thrown over the head and body.'—*Roberts*. ¶ *And the crisping-pins*. This phrase with us would denote *curling-irons*. But the Hebrew here denotes a very different article. It means *money-bags*, or *purses*. These were often made very large, and were highly ornamented; comp. 2 Kings v. 23. Frequently they were attached to the girdle.

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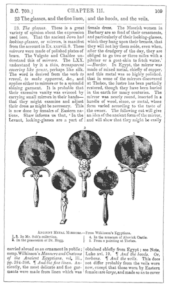

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER III. 109

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

23. *The glasses*. There is a great variety of opinion about the expression used here. That the ancient Jews had *looking-glasses*, or mirrors, is manifest from the account in Ex. xxxviii. 8. These *mirrors* were made of polished plates of brass. The Vulgate and Chaldee understand this of *mirrors*. The LXX. understand by it a *thin, transparent covering like gauze*, perhaps like silk. The word is derived from the verb *to reveal, to make apparent*, &c., and applies either to mirrors or to a splendid shining garment. It is probable that their excessive vanity was evinced by carrying small mirrors in their hands—that they might examine and adjust their dress as might be necessary. This is now done by females of Eastern nations. Shaw informs us that, 'In the Levant, looking-glasses are a part of female dress. The Moorish women in Barbary are so fond of their ornaments, and particularly of their looking-glasses, which they hang upon their breasts, that they will not lay them aside, even when, after the drudgery of the day, they are obliged to go two or three miles with a pitcher or a goat-skin to fetch water.'—*Burder*. In Egypt, the mirror was made of mixed metal, chiefly of copper, and this metal was so highly polished, that in some of the mirrors discovered at Thebes, the lustre has been partially restored, though they have been buried in the earth for many centuries. The mirror was nearly round, inserted in a handle of wood, stone, or metal, whose form varied according to the taste of the owner. The following cut will give an idea of the ancient form of the mirror, and will show that they might be easily

ANCIENT METAL MIRRORS.—From Wilkinson's Egyptians.
1, 3. In Mr. Salt's collection.
2. In the possession of Dr. Hogg.
4. In the museum of Alnwick Castle.
5. From a painting at Thebes.

carried abroad as an ornament in public; comp. Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii., pp. 384-386. ¶ *And the fine linen*. Anciently, the most delicate and fine garments were made from linen which was obtained chiefly from Egypt; see Note, Luke xvi. 19. ¶ *And the hoods*. Or, *turbans*. ¶ *And the veils*. This does not differ probably from the veils worn now, except that those worn by Eastern females are *large*, and made so as to cover

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110 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

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;[a] and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth: *and* burning instead of beauty.

a Mic.1.16.

the head and the shoulders, so that they may be drawn closely round the body, and effectually conceal the person; comp. Gen. xxiv. 65.

24. *And it shall come to pass.* The prophet proceeds to denounce the *judgment or punishment* that would come upon them for their pride and vanity. In the calamities that would befall the nation, all their ornaments of pride and vainglory would be stripped off; and instead of them, they would exhibit the marks, and wear the badges of calamity and grief. ¶ *Instead of sweet smell.* Hebrew בֹּשֶׂם *bōsĕm*, aromatics, perfumes, spicy fragrance; such as they used on their garments and persons. 'No one ever enters a company without being well perfumed; and in addition to various scents and oils, they are adorned with numerous garlands, made of the most odoriferous flowers.'—*Roberts.* 'The persons of the Assyrian ladies are elegantly clothed and scented with the richest oils and perfumes. When a queen was to be chosen to the king of Persia, instead of Vashti, the virgins collected at Susana, the capital, underwent a purification of twelve months' duration, to wit: "six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours." The general use of such precious oil and fragrant perfumes among the ancient Romans, particularly among the ladies of rank and fashion, may be inferred from these words of Virgil:

Ambrosiaeque comae divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere:— Æn. i. 403.

"From her head the ambrosial locks breathed divine fragrance."'—*Paxton.* ¶ *A stink.* This word properly means the fetor or offensive smell which attends the decomposition of a deceased body. It means that the bodies which they so carefully adorned, and which they so assiduously endeavoured to preserve in beauty by unguents and perfumes, would die and turn to corruption. ¶ *And instead of a girdle.* Girdles were an indispensable part of an Oriental dress. Their garments were loose and flowing, and it became necessary to gird them up when they ran, or danced, or laboured. ¶ *A rent.* There has been a great variety of opinion about the meaning of this word. The most probable signification is that which is derived from a verb meaning *to go around, encompass;* and hence that it denotes *a cord.* Instead of the beautiful girdle with which they girded themselves, there shall be *a cord*—an emblem of poverty, as the poor had nothing else with which to gird up their clothes;—a humiliating description of the calamities which were to come upon proud and vain females of the court. ¶ *And instead of well-set hair.* Hair that was curiously braided and adorned. 'No ladies pay more attention to the dressing of the hair than these [the dancing girls of India]; for as they never wear caps, they take great delight in this their natural ornament.'—*Roberts.* Miss Pardoe, in '*The City of the Sultan,*' says, that after taking a bath, the slaves who attended her spent an hour and a half in dressing and adorning her hair; comp. 1 Pet. iii. 3. ¶ *Instead of a stomacher.* It is not certainly known what is meant by this, but it probably means some sort of *girdle, or* a plaited or stiffened ornament worn on the breast. 'I once saw a dress beautifully plaited and stiffened for the front, but I do not think it common.'—*Roberts.* ¶ *A girding of sackcloth.* This is a coarse cloth that was commonly worn in times of affliction, as emblematic of grief; 2 Sam. iii. 31; 1 Kings xx. 31; xxi. 27; Job xvi. 15; Isa. xxxii. 11. ¶ *And burning.* The word here used does not occur elsewhere. It seems to denote *a brand, a mark burnt in, a stigma;* perhaps a sun-burnt countenance, indicating exposure in the long and wearisome journey of a captivity over burning sands and beneath a scorching sun. ¶ *Instead of beauty.* Instead of a fair and delicate complexion, cherished and nourished with care. Some of the

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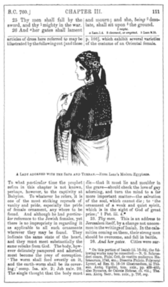

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER III. 111

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy [1]mighty in the war.
26 And [a]her gates shall lament and mourn; and she, *being* [2]desolate, shall sit upon [b]the ground.

1 might.
a Lam.1.4. 2 cleansed, or emptied. b Lam.2.10.

articles of dress here referred to may be illustrated by the following cut [and those p. 106], which exhibit several varieties of the costume of an Oriental female.

A LADY ADORNED WITH THE SAFA AND TURBAN.—From Lane's Modern Egyptians.

To what particular time the prophet refers in this chapter is not known, perhaps, however, to the captivity at Babylon. To whatever he refers, it is one of the most striking reproofs of vanity and pride, especially the pride of female ornament, any where to be found. And although he had *particular* reference to the Jewish females, yet there is no impropriety in regarding it as applicable to all such ornaments wherever they may be found. They indicate the same state of the heart, and they must meet substantially the same rebuke from God. The body, however delicately pampered and adorned, must become the prey of corruption. 'The worm shall feed sweetly on it, and the earth-worm shall be its covering;' comp. Isa. xiv. 2; Job xxiv. 20. The single thought that the body must die—that it must lie and moulder in the grave—should check the love of gay adorning, and turn the mind to a far more important matter—the salvation of the soul, which cannot die; to 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price;' 1 Pet. iii. 4.*

25. *Thy men.* This is an address to Jerusalem itself, by a change not uncommon in the writings of Isaiah. In the calamities coming on them, their strong men should be overcome, and fall in battle.

26. *And her gates.* Cities were sur-

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* On this portion of Isaiah (iii. 16-24), the following works may be consulted:—N. G. Schroederi comm. Philo. Crit. de vestitu mulierum Hebraeorum, 1745, 4to.; Dissertatio Philolo. Polycarpi Lyseri, ad Esa. iii. 16-24 illustrandum, in Thesau. Antiq. Ugolini, tom. xxix., pp. 439-442; also Bynaeus, de Calceis Hebraeorum, ch. viii.; Thesau. Antiq. Sacr., tom. xxix., p. 756, seq.

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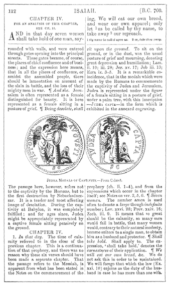

112 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR AN ANALYSIS OF THIS CHAPTER, SEE CH. II.

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 [1] us be called by thy name, to take away [2] our reproach.

[1] thy name be called upon us. [2] or, take thou away.

rounded with walls, and were entered through gates opening into the principal streets. These gates became, of course, the places of chief confluence and of business; and the expression here means, that in all the places of confluence, or amidst the assembled people, there should be lamentation on account of the slain in battle, and the loss of their mighty men in war. ¶ *And she.* Jerusalem is often represented as a female distinguished for beauty. It is here represented as a female sitting in a posture of grief. ¶ Being *desolate, shall sit upon the ground.* To sit on the ground, or in the dust, was the usual posture of grief and mourning, denoting great depression and humiliation; Lam. ii. 10; iii. 28; Jer. xv. 17; Job iii. 13; Ezra ix. 3–5. It is a remarkable coincidence, that in the medals which were made by the Romans to commemorate the captivity of Judea and Jerusalem, Judea is represented under the *figure* of a female sitting in a posture of grief, under a palm tree, with this inscription —Judea capta—in the form which is exhibited in the annexed engraving.

Judea Medals of Captivity.—From Calmet.

The passage here, however, refers not to the captivity by the Romans, but to the first destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. It is a tender and most affecting image of desolation. During the captivity at Babylon, it was completely fulfilled; and for ages since, Judea might be appropriately represented by a captive female sitting pensively on the ground.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *In that day.* The time of calamity referred to in the close of the previous chapter. This is a continuation of that prophecy, and there was no reason why these six verses should have been made a separate chapter. That the passage refers to the Messiah, is apparent from what has been stated in the Notes on the commencement of the prophecy (ch. ii. 1–4), and from the expressions which occur in the chapter itself; see Notes on ver. 2, 5, 6. ¶ *Seven women.* The number *seven* is used often to denote a *large* though *indefinite* number; Lev. xxvi. 28; Prov. xxiv. 16; Zech. iii. 9. It means that so great should be the calamity, so many men would fall in battle, that many women would, contrary to their natural modesty, become suitors to a single man, to obtain him as a husband and protector. ¶ *Shall take hold.* Shall apply to. The expression, 'shall take hold,' denotes the *earnestness* of their application. ¶ *We will eat our own bread,* &c. We do not ask this in order to be maintained. We will forego that which the law (Ex. xxi. 10) enjoins as the duty of the husband in case he has more than one wife.

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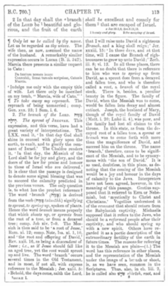

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER IV. 113

2 In that day shall the [a] branch of the Lord be [1] beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them [2] that are escaped of Israel.

[a] Jer.23.5,6; Zec.6.12,13.
[1] beauty and glory. [2] the escaping of Israel.

¶ *Only let us be called by thy name.* Let us be regarded as *thy wives.* The wife then, as now, assumed the name of the husband. A remarkably similar expression occurs in Lucan (B. ii. 342). Marcia there presents a similar request to Cato:

> Da tantum nomen inane
> Connubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse, Catonis
> Marcia.

'Indulge me only with the empty title of wife. Let there only be inscribed on my tomb, "Marcia, wife of Cato."' ¶ *To take away my reproach.* The reproach of being unmarried; comp. Gen. xxx. 23; 1 Sam. i. 6.

2. *The branch of the Lord.* צֶמַח יְהוָה. *The sprout of* Jehovah. This expression, and this verse, have had a great variety of interpretations. The LXX. read it, 'In that day God shall shine in counsel with glory upon the earth, to exalt, and to glorify the remnant of Israel.' The Chaldee renders it, 'In that day, the *Messiah* of the Lord shall be for joy and glory, and the doers of the law for praise and honour to those of Israel who are delivered.' It is clear that the passage is designed to denote some signal blessing that was to succeed the calamity predicted in the previous verses. The only question is, to what has the prophet reference? The word 'branch' (צֶמַח) is derived from the verb (צָמַח *tsâmâhh*) signifying *to sprout, to spring up,* spoken of plants. Hence the word *branch* means properly that which *shoots up,* or *sprouts* from the root of a tree, or from a decayed tree; comp. Job xiv. 7–9. The Messiah is thus said to be 'a root of Jesse,' Rom. xi. 12; comp. Note, Isa. xi. 1, 10, and 'the root and offspring of David,' Rev. xxii. 16, as being a *descendant* of Jesse; *i.e.,* as if Jesse should fall like an aged tree, yet the *root* would sprout up and live. The word 'branch' occurs several times in the Old Testament, and in most, if not all, with express reference to the Messiah; Jer. xxiii. 5: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous *Branch,* and a king shall reign;' Jer. xxxiii. 15: 'In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David;' Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12. In all these places, there can be no doubt that there is reference to him who was *to spring up* from David, as a sprout does from a decayed and fallen tree, and who is therefore called a *root,* a *branch* of the royal stock. There is, besides, a peculiar beauty in the figure. The family of David, when the Messiah was to come, would be fallen into decay and almost extinct. *Joseph,* the husband of Mary, though of the royal family of David (Matt. i. 20; Luke ii. 4), was poor, and the family had lost all claims to the throne. In this state, as from the decayed root of a fallen tree, a *sprout* or *branch* was to come forth with more than the magnificence of David, and succeed him on the throne. The name 'branch,' therefore, came to be significant of the Messiah, and to be synonymous with 'the son of David.' It is so used, doubtless, in this place, as denoting that the coming of the Messiah would be a joy and honour in the days of calamity to the Jews. Interpreters have not been agreed, however, in the meaning of this passage. Grotius supposed that it referred to Ezra or Nehemiah, but 'mystically to Christ and Christians.' Vogellius understood it of the *remnant* that should return from the Babylonish captivity. Michaelis supposed that it refers to the *Jews,* who should be a *reformed* people after their captivity, and who should *spring up* with a new spirit. Others have regarded it as a poetic description of the extraordinary fertility of the earth in future times. The reasons for referring it to the Messiah are plain—(1.) The word has this reference in other places, and the representation of the Messiah under the image of a branch or shoot, is, as we have seen, common in the Scriptures. Thus, also, in ch. liii. 2, he is called also שֹׁרֶשׁ *shōrěsh,* root, and

Isaiah I. 8

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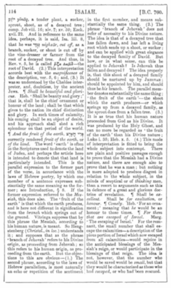

114 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

יוֹנֵק *yōnēq,* a tender plant, a sucker, sprout, shoot, as of a decayed tree; comp. Job viii. 16; xiv. 7; xv. 30; Ezek. xvii. 22. And in reference to the same idea, perhaps, it is said, Isa. liii. 8, that he was נִגְזַר *nighzăr, cut off,* as a branch, sucker, or shoot is cut off by the vine-dresser or farmer from the root of a decayed tree. And thus, in Rev. v. 5, he is called ῥίζα Δαβίδ—the root of David. (2.) This interpretation accords best with the *magnificence* of the description, ver. 5, 6; and, (3.) It was so understood by the Chaldee interpreter, and, doubtless, by the ancient Jews. ¶ *Shall be beautiful and glorious.* Heb. 'Shall be beauty and glory;' that is, shall be the chief ornament or honour of the land; shall be that which gives to the nation its chief distinction and glory. In such times of calamity, his coming shall be an *object of desire,* and his approach shall shed a rich splendour on that period of the world. ¶ *And the fruit of the earth.* פְּרִי הָאָרֶץ, correctly rendered *fruit of the earth,* or *of the land.* The word 'earth' is often in the Scriptures used to denote the land of Judea, and perhaps the article here is intended to denote that that land is particularly intended. This is the parallel expression to the former part of the verse, in accordance with the laws of Hebrew poetry, by which one member of a sentence expresses substantially the same meaning as the former; see Introduction, § 8. If the former expression referred to the *Messiah,* this does also. The 'fruit of the earth' is that which the earth produces, and is here not different in signification from the *branch* which springs out of the ground. Vitringa supposes that by this phrase the Messiah, according to his human nature, is meant. So Hengstenberg (*Christol., in loc.*) understands it; and supposes that as the phrase 'branch of Jehovah' refers to his Divine origin, as proceeding from Jehovah; so this refers to his human origin, as proceeding from the earth. But the objections to this are obvious—(1.) The second phrase, according to the laws of Hebrew parallelism, is most naturally an echo or repetition of the sentiment in the first member, and means substantially the same thing. (2.) The phrase 'branch of Jehovah' does not refer of necessity to his Divine nature. The idea is that of a decayed tree that has fallen down, and has left a living root which sends up a shoot, or sucker; and can be applied with great elegance to the decayed family of David. But how, or in what sense, can this be applied to Jehovah? Is Jehovah thus fallen and decayed? The idea properly is, that this shoot of a decayed family should be nurtured up by Jehovah; should be appointed by him, and should thus be *his* branch. The parallel member denotes substantially the same thing; 'the fruit of the earth'—the shoot which the earth produces—or which springs up from a decayed family, as the sprout does from a fallen tree. (3.) It is as true that his human nature proceeded from God as his Divine. It was produced by the Holy Ghost, and can no more be regarded as 'the fruit of the earth' than his Divine nature; Luke i. 35; Heb. x. 5. (4.) This mode of interpretation is fitted to bring the whole subject into contempt. There are plain and positive passages enough to prove that the Messiah had a Divine nature, and there are enough also to prove that he was a man; but nothing is more adapted to produce disgust in relation to the whole subject, in the minds of sceptical or of *thinking* men, than a resort to arguments such as this in defence of a great and glorious doctrine of revelation. ¶ Shall be *excellent.* Shall be *for exaltation,* or *honour.* ¶ *Comely.* Heb. 'For an ornament;' meaning that *he* would be an honour to those times. ¶ *For them that are escaped of Israel.* Marg. 'The escaping of Israel.' For the remnant, the small number that shall escape the calamities—a description of the pious portion of Israel which now escaped from all calamities—would rejoice in the anticipated blessings of the Messiah's reign, or would participate in the blessings of that reign. The idea is not, however, that the number who would be saved would be *small,* but that they would be characterized as those who had *escaped,* or who had been rescued.

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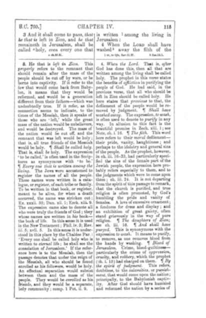

3 And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called [a] holy, *even* every one that is written [1] among the living in Jerusalem:

4 When the LORD shall have washed [b] away the filth of the

a ch.60.21. 1 or, to life, Rev.21.27. b Zec.13.1.

3. He that is *left in Zion*. This *properly refers* to the remnant that should remain after the mass of the people should be cut off by wars, or be borne into captivity. If it refer to the few that would come back from Babylon, it means that they would be reformed, and would be a generation different from their fathers—which was undoubtedly true. If it refer, as the connection seems to indicate, to the times of the Messiah, then it speaks of those who are 'left,' while the great mass of the nation would be unbelievers, and would be destroyed. The mass of the nation would be cut off, and the remnant that was left would be holy; that is, all true friends of the Messiah would be holy. ¶ *Shall be called holy.* That is, shall *be* holy. The expression 'to be called,' is often used in the Scriptures as synonymous with 'to be.' ¶ *Every one that is written among the living.* The Jews were accustomed to register the names of all the people. Those names were written in a catalogue, or register, of each tribe or family. To be written in that book, or register, meant to be alive, for when a death occurred, the name was stricken out; Ex. xxxii. 32; Dan. xii. 1; Ezek. xiii. 9. The expression came also to denote all who were truly the friends of God; they whose names are written in *his* book—the book of life. In this sense it is used in the New Testament; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5; xvii. 5. In this sense it is understood in this place by the Chaldee Par.: 'Every one shall be called holy who is written to *eternal* life; he shall see the consolation *of Jerusalem*.' If the reference here is to the Messiah, then the passage denotes that under the reign of the Messiah, all who should be found enrolled as his followers, would be holy. An effectual separation would subsist between them and the mass of the people. They would be *enrolled* as his friends, and they would be a separate, holy community; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

4. *When the Lord.* That is, *after* God has done this, then all that are written among the living shall be called holy. The prophet in this verse states the benefits of *affliction* in *purifying* the people of God. He had said, in the previous verse, that all who should be left in Zion should be called holy. He here states that *previous* to that, the defilement of the people would be removed by judgment. ¶ *Shall have washed away.* The expression, *to wash*, is often used to denote to *purify* in any way. In allusion to this fact is the beautiful promise in Zech. xiii. 1; see Note, ch. i. 16. ¶ *The filth.* This word here refers to their *moral* defilement—their pride, vanity, haughtiness; and perhaps to the idolatry and general sins of the people. As the prophet, however, in ch. iii. 16–23, had particularly specified the sins of the female part of the Jewish people, the expression here probably refers especially to them, and to the judgments which were to come upon them; ch. iii. 24. It is not departing from the spirit of this passage to remark, that the church is purified, and true religion is often promoted, by God's humbling the pride and vanity of females. A love of excessive ornament; a fondness for dress and display; and an exhibition of great gaiety, often stand grievously in the way of pure religion. ¶ *The daughters of Zion;* see ch. iii. 16. ¶ *And shall have purged.* This is synonymous with the expression *to wash*. It means to purify, to remove, as one removes blood from the hands by washing. ¶ *Blood of Jerusalem.* Crime, blood-guiltiness—particularly the crime of *oppression*, *cruelty*, and *robbery*, which the prophet (ch. i. 15) had charged on them. ¶ *By the spirit of judgment.* This refers, doubtless, to the *calamities*, or *punishment*, that would come upon the nation; principally, to the Babylonish captivity. After God should have humbled and reformed the nation by a series of

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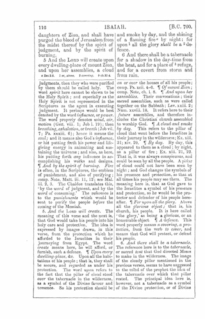

daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

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 [a] by night: for upon [1] all the glory *shall be* a [2] defence.

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

a Zec.2.5. 1 or, above. 2 covering. b ch.32.4.

judgments, then they who were purified by them should be called holy. The word *spirit* here cannot be shown to be the Holy Spirit; and especially as the Holy Spirit is not represented in the Scriptures as the agent in executing judgment. It perhaps would be best denoted by the word *influence*, or *power*. The word properly denotes *wind*, *air*, *motion* (Gen. viii. 1; Job i. 19); then *breathing*, *exhalation*, or *breath* (Job vii. 7; Ps. xxxiii. 6); hence it means the *soul;* and it means also God's *influence*, or his putting forth his power and life-giving energy in animating and sustaining the universe; and also, as here, his putting forth *any* influence in accomplishing his works and designs. ¶ *And by the spirit of burning. Fire* is often, in the Scriptures, the emblem of punishment, and also of purifying; comp. Note, Matt. iii. 11, 12; see Mal. iii. 2, 3. The Chaldee translates this, 'by the *word* of judgment, and by the *word* of consuming.' The reference is to the *punishments* which would be sent to purify the people *before* the coming of the Messiah.

5. *And the* LORD *will create.* The meaning of this verse and the next is, that God would take his people into his holy care and protection. The idea is expressed by images drawn, in this verse, from the protection which he afforded to the Israelites in their journeying from Egypt. The word *create* means here, he will afford, or furnish, such a defence. ¶ *Upon every dwelling-place, &c.* Upon all the habitations of his people; that is, they shall be secure, and regarded as under his protection. The word *upon* refers to the fact that the pillar of cloud stood over the tabernacle in the wilderness, as a symbol of the Divine favour and presence. So his protection should be *on* or *over* the houses of all his people; comp. Ps. xcii. 4–6. ¶ *Of mount Zion;* comp. Note, ch. i. 8. ¶ *And upon her assemblies.* Their convocations; their sacred assemblies, such as were called together on the Sabbath; Lev. xxiii. 2; Num. xxviii. 18. It refers here to their *future* assemblies, and therefore includes the Christian church assembled to worship God. ¶ *A cloud and smoke by day.* This refers to the pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites in their journey in the wilderness; Ex. xiii. 21; xiv. 20. ¶ *By day.* By day, this appeared to them as a cloud; by night, as a pillar of fire; Ex. xiii. 21, 22. That is, it was always conspicuous, and could be seen by all the people. A pillar of cloud could not have been seen by night; and God changes the symbols of his presence and protection, so that at all times his people may see them. The meaning here is, that as God gave to the Israelites a symbol of his presence and protection, so he would be the protector and defender of his people hereafter. ¶ *For upon all the glory.* Above all the *glorious object;* that is, his church, his people. It is here called 'the glory,' as being a glorious, or an honourable object. ¶ *A defence.* This word properly means *a covering*, *a protection*, from the verb *to cover*, and means that God will protect, or defend his people.

6. *And there shall be a tabernacle.* The reference here is to the *tabernacle*, or sacred *tent* that God directed Moses to make in the wilderness. The image of the cloudy pillar mentioned in the previous verses, seems to have suggested to the mind of the prophet the idea of the tabernacle over which that pillar rested. The principal idea here is, however, not a tabernacle as a symbol of the Divine protection, or of Divine

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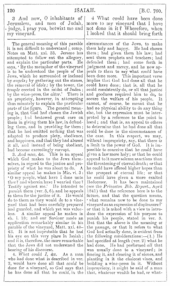

120 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

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

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

The general meaning of this parable it is not difficult to understand; comp. Notes on Matt. xxi. 33. Jerome has attempted to follow out the allegory, and explain the particular parts. He says, 'By the metaphor of the vineyard is to be understood the people of the Jews, which he surrounded or inclosed by *angels*; by gathering out the stones, the removal of *idols*; by the tower, the *temple* erected in the midst of Judea; by the wine-press, the *altar*.' There is no propriety, however, in attempting thus minutely to explain the particular parts of the figure. The general meaning is, that God had chosen the Jewish people; had bestowed great care on them in giving them his law, in defending them, and in providing for them; that he had omitted nothing that was adapted to produce piety, obedience, and happiness, and that they had abused it all, and instead of being obedient, had become exceedingly corrupt.

3. *And now, &c.* This is an appeal which God makes to the Jews themselves, in regard to the justice and propriety of what he was about to do. A similar appeal he makes in Mic. vi. 3: 'O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.' He intended to *punish* them (ver. 5, 6), and he appeals to them for the justice of it. He would do to them as they would do to a vineyard that had been carefully prepared and guarded, and which yet was valueless. A similar appeal he makes in ch. i. 18; and our Saviour made an application remarkably similar in his parable of the vineyard, Matt. xxi. 40–43. It is not improbable that he had his eye on this very place in Isaiah; and it is, therefore, the more remarkable that the Jews did not understand the bearing of his discourse.

4. *What could I, &c.* As a man who had done what is described in ver. 2, would have done all that *could* be done for a vineyard, so God says that he has done all that he could, in the circumstances of the Jews, to make them holy and happy. He had chosen them; had given them his law; had sent them prophets and teachers; had defended them; had come forth in judgment and mercy, and he now appeals *to them* to say what *could* have been done more. This important verse implies that God had done all that he could have done; that is, all that he could consistently do, or all that justice and goodness required him to do, to secure the welfare of his people. It cannot, of course, be meant that he had no physical ability to do any thing else, but the expression must be interpreted by a reference to the point in hand; and that is, an appeal to others to determine that he had done all that could be done in the circumstances of the case. In this respect, we may, without impropriety, say, that there *is* a limit to the power of God. It is impossible to conceive that he *could* have given a law more holy; or that he could append to it more solemn sanctions than the threatening of eternal death; or that he could have offered higher hopes than the prospect of eternal life; or that he could have given a more exalted Redeemer. It has been maintained (see the *Princeton Bib. Report.*, April 1841) that the reference here is to the future, and that the question means, 'what remains now to be done to my vineyard as an expression of displeasure?' or that it is asked with a view to introduce the expression of his purpose to punish his people, stated in ver. 5. But that the above is the meaning of the passage, or that it refers to what God had actually done, is evident from the following considerations:—(1.) He had specified at length (ver. 2) what he had done. He had performed *all* that was usually done to a vineyard; in fencing it, and clearing it of stones, and planting in it the choicest vines, and building a wine-press in it. Without impropriety, it might be said of a man that, whatever wealth he had, or what-

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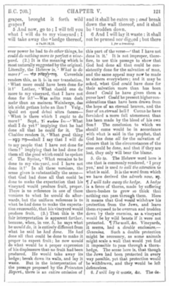

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER V. 121

grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

5 And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the [a]hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be [1]trodden down.

6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there

[a] Ps.80.12,13.

[1] for a treading.

ever power he had to do *other* things, he *could do nothing more to perfect a vineyard.* (2.) It is the meaning which is most naturally suggested by the original. Literally, the Hebrew is, '*What to do more?*'—מַה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד. Coverdale renders this, as it is in our translation, 'What more could have been done for it?' Luther, 'What should one do more to my vineyard, that I have not done for it?'—Was sollte man doch mehr thun an meinem Weinberge, das ich nicht gethan habe an ihm? Vulg., Quid est quod debui ultra facere—'What is there which I *ought* to do more?' Sept., Τί ποιήσω ἔτι—'What shall I do yet?' implying that he had done all that he could for it. The Chaldee renders it, 'What good thing—מָה טָבָא—shall I say that I will do to my people that I have not done for them?' implying that he had done for them all the good which could be spoken of. The Syriac, 'What remains to be done to my vineyard, and I have not done it?' In all these versions, the sense given is substantially the same—that God had done all that could be done to make the expectation that his vineyard would produce fruit, proper. There is no reference in one of these versions to what he *would* do afterwards, but the uniform reference is to what he *had* done to make the expectation *reasonable*, that his vineyard would produce fruit. (3.) That this is the fair interpretation is apparent farther, because, when, in ver. 5, he says what he *would do*, it is entirely different from what he said he *had done*. He *had* done all that could be done to make it proper to expect fruit; he *now* would do what would be a proper expression of his displeasure that no fruit had been produced. He would take away its hedge; break down its walls, and lay it waste. But in the interpretation of the passage proposed by the *Princeton Report.*, there is an entire omission of this part of the verse—'that I have not done in it.' It is not improper, therefore, to use this passage to show that God had done all that could be consistently done for the salvation of man, and the same appeal may now be made to sinners everywhere; and it may be asked, what God *could* have done for their salvation more than has been done? *Could* he have given them a purer law? *Could* he present higher considerations than have been drawn from the hope of an *eternal* heaven, and the fear of an *eternal* hell? COULD he have furnished a more full atonement than has been made by the blood of his own Son? The conclusion to which we should come would be in accordance with what is said in the prophet, that God has done *all* for the salvation of sinners that in the circumstances of the case could be done, and that if they are lost, they only will bear the blame.

5. *Go to.* The Hebrew word here is one that is commonly rendered, 'I pray you,' and is used *to call the attention* to what is said. It is the word from which we have derived the adverb *now*, נָא. ¶ *I will take away the hedge.* A *hedge* is a fence of thorns, made by suffering thorn-bushes to grow so thick that nothing can pass through them. Here it means that God would withdraw his protection from the Jews, and leave them exposed to be overrun and trodden down by their enemies, as a vineyard would be by wild beasts if it were not protected. ¶ *The wall, &c.* Vineyards, it seems, had a *double* enclosure.—*Gesenius.* Such a double protection might be necessary, as some animals might scale a wall that would yet find it impossible to pass through a thorn-hedge. The sense here is, that though the Jews had been protected in every way possible, yet that protection would be withdrawn, and they would be left defenceless.

6. *I will lay it waste, &c.* The de-

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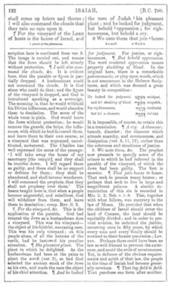

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shall come up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah [1]his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold [2]oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

8 Wo unto them that join [a]house

[1] plant of his pleasures.

[2] a scab.

[a] Mic.2.2.

scription here is continued from ver. 5. The image is carried out, and means that the Jews should be left utterly without protection. ¶ *I will also command the clouds, &c.* It is evident here, that the parable or figure is partially dropped. A husbandman could not command the clouds. It is God alone who could do that; and the figure of the vineyard is dropped, and God is introduced speaking as a sovereign. The meaning is, that he would withhold his Divine influences, and would abandon them to desolation. The sense of the whole verse is plain. God would leave the Jews without protection; he would remove the guards, the helps, the influences, with which he had favoured them, and leave them to their own course, as a vineyard that was unpruned, uncultivated, unwatered. The Chaldee has well expressed the sense of the passage: 'I will take away the house of my sanctuary [the temple], and they shall be trodden down. I will regard them as guilty, and there shall be no support or defence for them; they shall be abandoned, and shall become wanderers. I will command the prophets, that they shall not prophesy over them.' The lesson taught here is, that when a people become ungrateful, and rebellious, God will withdraw from them, and leave them to desolation; comp. Rev. ii. 5.

7. *For the vineyard, &c.* This is the application of the parable. God had treated the Jews as a husbandman does a vineyard. This was *his* vineyard—the object of his faithful, unceasing care. This was his *only* vineyard; on this people alone, of all the nations of the earth, had he bestowed his peculiar attention. ¶ *His pleasant plant.* The plant in which he delighted. As the husbandman had been at the pains to plant the *sorek* (ver. 2), so had God selected the ancient stock of the Jews as his own, and made the race the object of his chief attention. ¶ *And he looked for judgment.* For justice, or righteousness. ¶ *But behold oppression.* The word rendered *oppression* means properly *shedding of blood.* In the original here, there is a remarkable *paronomasia*, or play upon words, which is not uncommon in the Hebrew Scriptures, and which was deemed a great beauty in composition:

He looked for *judgment*,	מִשְׁפָּט	*mishpat*,
and lo! *shedding of blood*,	מִשְׂפָּח	*mispâhh*;
For *righteousness*,	צְדָקָה	*tsedhâkâ*,
but lo! *a clamour*,	צְעָקָה	*tse'âkâ*.

It is impossible, of course, to retain this in a translation. ¶ *A cry. A clamour*; tumult, disorder; the clamour which attends anarchy, and covetousness, and dissipation (ver. 8, 11, 12), rather than the soberness and steadiness of justice.

8. *Wo unto them, &c.* The prophet now proceeds to *specify* some of the crimes to which he had referred in the parable of the vineyard, of which the Jews had been guilty. The first is *avarice.* ¶ *That join house to house.* That seek to possess many houses; or perhaps that seek to live in large and magnificent palaces. A similar denunciation of this sin is recorded in Mic. ii. 2; Neh. v. 1–8. This, together with what follows, was contrary to the law of Moses. He provided that when the children of Israel should enter the land of Canaan, the land should be equitably divided; and in order to prevent avarice, he ordained the *jubilee*, occurring once in fifty years, by which every man and every family should be restored to their former possession; Lev. xxv. Perhaps there could have been no law so well framed to prevent the existence, and avoid the evils of covetousness. Yet, in defiance of the obvious requirements and spirit of that law, the people in the time of Isaiah had become generally covetous. ¶ That *lay field to field.* That purchase one farm after another.

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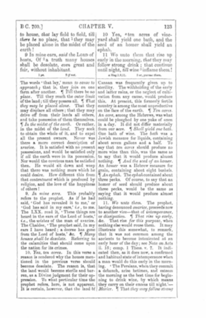

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER V. 123

to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that [1] they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

9 In mine ears, *said* the LORD of hosts, Of [2] a truth many houses shall be desolate, *even* great and fair, without inhabitant.

10 Yea, [a] ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

11 Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine [3] inflame them!

[1] ye. [2] if not. [a] Hag. i. 9, 11. [3] or, pursue them.

The words 'that lay,' mean *to cause to approach*; that is, they *join on* one farm after another. ¶ *Till there be no place.* Till they reach the *outer limit* of the land; till they possess all. ¶ *That they may be placed alone.* That they may displace all others; that they may drive off from their lands all others, and take possession of them themselves. ¶ *In the midst of the earth.* Or rather, in the midst of the *land*. They seek to obtain the whole of it, and to expel all the present owners. Never was there a more correct description of avarice. It is satisfied with no present possessions, and would be satisfied only if *all* the earth were in its possession. Nor would the covetous man be satisfied then. He would sit down and weep that there was nothing more which he could desire. How different this from that *contentment* which is produced by religion, and the love of the happiness of others!

9. *In mine ears.* This probably refers to the prophet. As if he had said, 'God has revealed it to me,' or 'God has said in my ears,' *i.e.*, to me. The LXX. read it, 'These things are heard in the ears of the Lord of hosts,' *i.e.*, the *wishes* of the man of avarice. The Chaldee, 'The prophet said, In my ears I have heard; a decree has gone from the Lord of hosts,' &c. ¶ *Many houses shall be desolate.* Referring to the calamities that should come upon the nation for its crimes.

10. *Yea, ten acres.* In this verse a reason is rendered why the houses mentioned in the previous verse should become desolate. The reason is, that the land would become sterile and barren, as a Divine judgment for their oppression. To what particular time the prophet refers, here, is not apparent. It is certain, however, that the land of Canaan was frequently given up to sterility. The withholding of the early and latter rains, or the neglect of cultivation from any cause, would produce this. At present, this formerly fertile country is among the most unproductive on the face of the earth. ¶ *Ten acres.* An *acre*, among the Hebrews, was what could be ploughed by one yoke of oxen in a day. It did not differ materially from our acre. ¶ *Shall yield one bath.* One bath of wine. The *bath* was a Jewish measure for liquids, containing about seven gallons and a half. To say that *ten acres* should produce no more wine than this, was the same as to say that it would produce almost nothing. ¶ *And the seed of an homer.* An *homer* was a Hebrew measure for grain, containing about eight bushels. ¶ *An ephah.* The *ephah* contained about three pecks. Of course, to say that an homer of seed should produce about three pecks, would be the same as saying that it would produce almost nothing.

11. *Wo unto them.* The prophet, having denounced *avarice*, proceeds now to another vice—that of *intemperance*, or *dissipation*. ¶ *That rise up early,* &c. That rise *for this purpose*, when nothing else would rouse them. It may illustrate this somewhat, to remark, that it was not common among the ancients to become intoxicated at an early hour of the day; see Note on Acts ii. 15; comp. 1 Thess. v. 7. It indicated then, as it does now, a confirmed and habitual state of intemperance when a man would do this early in the morning. 'The Persians, when they commit a debauch, arise betimes, and esteem the morning as the best time for beginning to drink wine, by which means they carry on their excess till night.'—*Morier*. ¶ That *they may follow strong*

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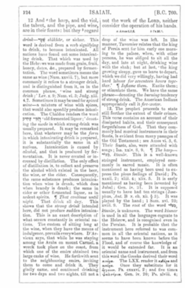

124 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

12 And [a] the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they [b] regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

[a] Amos vi. 5, 6. [b] Ps. xxviii. 5.

drink—שֵׁכָר *shêkâr*, or sichar. This word is derived from a verb signifying to drink, to become intoxicated. All nations have found out some intoxicating drink. That which was used by the Hebrews was made from grain, fruit, honey, dates, &c., prepared by fermentation. The word sometimes means the same as wine (Num. xxviii. 7), but more commonly it refers to a stronger drink, and is distinguished from it, as in the common phrase, 'wine and strong drink;' Lev. x. 9; Num. vi. 3; Judg. xiii. 4, 7. Sometimes it may be used for *spiced wine*—a mixture of wine with spices, that would also speedily produce intoxication. The Chaldee renders the word חֲמַר עַתִּיק 'old fermented liquor;' denoting the *mode* in which strong drink was usually prepared. It may be remarked here, that whatever may be the *form* in which intoxicating drink is prepared, it is substantially the same in all nations. Intoxication is caused by *alcohol*, and that is produced by fermentation. It is never created or increased by distillation. The only effect of distillation is, to collect and preserve the alcohol which existed in the beer, the wine, or the cider. Consequently, the same substance produces intoxication when wine is drank, which does when brandy is drank; the same in cider or other fermented liquor, as in ardent spirits. ¶ *That continue until night.* That drink all day. This shows that the *strong drink* intended here, did not produce *sudden* intoxication. This is an exact description of what occurs constantly in oriental nations. The custom of sitting long at the wine, when they have the means of indulgence, prevails everywhere. D'Arvieux says, that while he was staying among the Arabs on mount Carmel, a wreck took place on the coast, from which one of the emirs obtained two large casks of wine. He forthwith sent to the neighbouring emirs, inviting them to come and drink it. They gladly came, and continued drinking for two days and two nights, till not a drop of the wine was left. In like manner, Tavernier relates that the king of Persia sent for him early one morning to the palace, when, with other persons, he was obliged to sit all the day, and late at night, drinking wine with the shah; but at last, 'the king growing sleepy, gave us leave to depart, which we did very willingly, having had hard labour *for seventeen hours together*.' ¶ *Inflame them.* Excite them; or stimulate them. We have the same phrase—denoting the *burning* tendency of strong drink. The American Indians appropriately call it *fire-water*.

12. The prophet proceeds to state still further the extent of their crimes. This verse contains an account of their dissipated habits, and their consequent forgetfulness of God. That they commonly had musical instruments in their feasts, is evident from many passages of the Old Testament; see Amos vi. 5, 6. Their feasts, also, were attended with songs; Isa. xxiv. 8, 9. ¶ *The harp*—כִּנּוֹר, *kinnōr*. This is a well-known stringed instrument, employed commonly in sacred music. It is often mentioned as having been used to express the pious feelings of David; Ps. xxxii. 2; xliii. 4; xlix. 5. It is early mentioned as having been invented by Jubal; Gen. iv. 21. It is supposed usually to have had ten strings (Josephus, *Ant.* B. x. ch. xii. § 3). It was played by the hand; 1 Sam. xvi. 23; xviii. 9. The *root* of the word כִּנּוֹר, *kinnōr*, is unknown. The word *kinnor* is used in all the languages cognate to the Hebrew, and is recognised even in the Persian. It is probable that the instrument here referred to was common in all the oriental nations, as it seems to have been known before the Flood, and of course the knowledge of it would be extended far. It is an oriental name and instrument, and from this word the Greeks derived their word κινύρα. The LXX. render it κιθάρα and κινύρα. Once they substitute for it ὄργανον, Ps. cxxxvi. 2; and five times ψαλτήριον, Gen. iv. 20; Ps. xlviii. 4;

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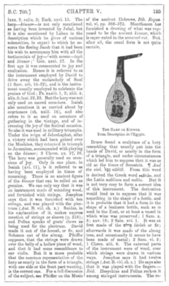

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lxxx. 2; cxlix. 3; Ezek. xxvi. 13. The harp—*kinnor*—is not only mentioned as having been invented by Jubal, but it is also mentioned by Laban in the description which he gives of various solemnities, in regard to which he assures the fleeing Jacob that it had been his wish to accompany him with all the testimonials of joy—'with music—*toph* and *kinnor*;' Gen. xxxi. 27. In the first age it was consecrated to joy and exultation. Hence it is referred to as the instrument employed by David to drive away the melancholy of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 16–22), and is the instrument usually employed to celebrate the praises of God; Ps. xxxiii. 1, 2; xliii. 4; xlix. 5; lxxi. 22, 23. But the harp was not only used on sacred occasions. Isaiah also mentions it as carried about by courtezans (ch. xxiii. 16), and also refers to it as used on occasions of gathering in the vintage, and of increasing the joy of the festival occasion. So also it was used in military triumphs. Under the reign of Jehoshaphat, after a victory which had been gained over the Moabites, they returned in triumph to Jerusalem, accompanied with playing on the *kinnor*; 2 Chron. xx. 27, 28. The harp was generally used on occasions of joy. Only in one place, in Isaiah (xvi. 11), is it referred to as having been employed in times of mourning. There is no ancient figure of the *kinnor* that can be relied on as genuine. We can only say that it was an instrument made of sounding wood, and furnished with strings. Josephus says that it was furnished with ten strings, and was played with the plectrum (*Ant.* B. viii. ch. x.) Suidas, in his explanation of it, makes express mention of strings or sinews (p. 318); and Pollux speaks of goats' claws as being used for the plectrum. David made it out of the *berosh*, or fir, and Solomon out of the almug. Pfeiffer supposes, that the strings were drawn over the belly of a hollow piece of wood, and that it had some resemblance to our violin. But it is more probable that the common representation of the harp as nearly in the form of a triangle, with one side or the front part wanting, is the correct one. For a full discussion of the subject, see Pfeiffer on the Music of the ancient Hebrews, *Bib. Repos.* vol. vi, pp. 366–373. Montfaucon has furnished a drawing of what was supposed to be the ancient *kinnor*, which is represented in the annexed cut. But, after all, the usual form is not quite certain.

THE HARP OR KINNOR.
From Description de l'Egypte.

Bruce found a sculpture of a harp resembling that usually put into the hands of David, or nearly in the form of a triangle, and under circumstances which led him to suppose that it was as old as the times of Sesostris. ¶ *And the viol.* נֵבֶל *nêbĕl*. From this word is derived the Greek word νάβλα, and the Latin *nablium* and *nabla*. But it is not very easy to form a correct idea of this instrument. The derivation would lead us to suppose that it was something in the shape of a *bottle*, and it is probable that it had a form in the shape of a leathern bottle, such as is used in the East, or at least a vessel in which wine was preserved; 1 Sam. x. 3; xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvi. 1. It was at first made of the בְּרוֹשׁ *bĕrōsh* or fir; afterwards it was made of the almug tree, and occasionally it seems to have been made of metal; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Chron. xiii. 8. The external parts of the instrument were of wood, over which strings were drawn in various ways. Josephus says it had twelve strings (*Ant.* B. viii. ch. x.) He says also that it was played with the fingers.—*Ibid.* Hesychius and Pollux reckon it among stringed instruments. The re-

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sonance had its origin in the vessel or the bottom part of the instrument, upon which the strings were drawn. According to Ovid, this instrument was played on with both hands:

Quamvis mutus erat, voci favisse putatur
Piscis, Arioniae fabula nota lyrae.
Disce etiam duplici genialia palmâ
Verrere. *De Arte Amandi,* lib. iii. 327.

According to Jerome, Isodorus, and Cassiodorus, it had the form of an inverted Greek Delta ∇. Pfeiffer supposes that this instrument was probably the same as is found represented on ancient monuments. The belly of the instrument is a wooden bowl, having a small hole in the under part, and is covered over with a stretched skin, which is higher in the middle than at the sides. Two posts, which are fastened together at the top by a cross piece, pass obliquely through this skin. Five strings pass over this skin, having a bridge for their support on the cross piece. The instrument has no pins or screws, but every string is fastened by means of some linen wound with it around this cross piece. The description of this instrument is furnished by Niebuhr (*Th.* i. p. 179). It is played on in two ways, either by being struck with the finger, or by a piece of leather, or perhaps a quill hung at its side and drawn across the strings. It cannot with certainty be determined when this instrument was invented, or when it came into use among the Hebrews. It is first mentioned in the time of Saul (1 Sam. x. 5), and from this time onward it is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. It was used particularly in the public worship of God; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Kings x. 12; 2 Chron. xx. 28; xxix. 25; 1 Chron. xv. 16; xvi. 5. It was usually accompanied with other instruments, and was also used in festivals and entertainments; see *Bib. Repos.* vol. vi. pp. 357–365. The usual form of representing it is shown in the preceding cut, and is the form in which the lyre appears on ancient monuments, in connection with the statues of Apollo.

Lyre.—From some of the Ancient Sculptures.

The annexed cut is a representation of a lyre from a Jewish shekel of the time of Simon Maccabeus, and may have been, not improbably, a form in frequent use among the Jews.

Lyre.
From the Medals of Simon Maccabeus.

Niebuhr has furnished us with an instrument from the East, which is supposed to have a very near resemblance to that which is referred to by Isaiah. This instrument is represented in the following cut.

Eastern Lyre.
From Description de l'Egypte.

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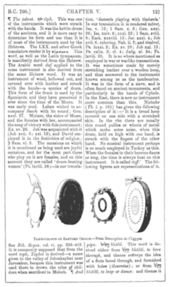

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER V. 127

¶ *The tabret.* תֹּף *tôph.* This was one of the instruments which were struck with the hands. It was the kettle-drum of the ancients, and it is more easy to determine its form and use than it is of most of the instruments used by the Hebrews. The LXX. and other Greek translators render it by τύμπανον. This word, as well as the Latin tympanum, is manifestly derived from the Hebrew. The Arabic word *duf* applied to the same instrument is also derived from the same Hebrew word. It was an instrument of wood, hollowed out, and covered over with leather and struck with the hands—a species of drum. This form of the drum is used by the Spaniards, and they have preserved it ever since the time of the Moors. It was early used. Laban wished to accompany Jacob with its sound; Gen. xxxi. 27. Miriam, the sister of Moses, and the females with her, accompanied the song of victory with this instrument; Ex. xv. 20. Job was acquainted with it (Job xvii. 6; xxi. 12), and David employed it in the festivities of religion; 2 Sam. vi. 5. The occasions on which it is mentioned as being used are joyful occasions, and for the most part those who play on it are females, and on this account they are called 'drum-beating women' (Ps. lxviii. 26)—in our translation, 'damsels playing with timbrels.' In our translation it is rendered *tabret,* Isa. v. 12; 1 Sam. x. 5; Gen. xxxi. 26; Isa. xxiv. 8; xxx. 32; 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Ezek. xxxviii. 13; Jer. xxxi. 4; Job xvii. 6; *tabering,* Nah. ii. 7; and *timbrel,* Ps. lxxxi. 2; Ex. xv. 20; Job xxi. 12; Ps. cxlix. 3; cl. 4; Judg. xi. 34; Ps. lxviii. 25. It is no where mentioned as employed in war or warlike transactions. It was sometimes made by merely stretching leather over a wooden hoop, and thus answered to the instrument known among us as the tambourine. It was in the form of a sieve, and is often found on ancient monuments, and particularly in the hands of Cybele. In the East, there is now no instrument more common than this. Niebuhr (*Th.* i. p. 181) has given the following description of it:—'It is a broad hoop covered on one side with a stretched skin. In the rim there are usually thin round pullies or wheels of metal which make some noise, when this drum, held on high with one hand, is struck with the fingers of the other hand. No musical instrument perhaps is so much employed in Turkey as this. When the females in their harems dance or sing, the time is always beat on this instrument. It is called *doff.*' The following figures are representations of it.

Tambourines of Eastern Origin.—From Description de l'Egypte.

See *Bib. Repos.* vol. vi. pp. 398–402. It is commonly supposed that from the word *toph,* *Tophet* is derived—a name given to the valley of Jehoshaphat near Jerusalem, because this instrument was used there to drown the cries of children when sacrificed to Moloch. ¶ *And pipe.* חָלִיל *hhâlîl.* This word is derived either from חָלַל *hhâlăl, to bore through,* and thence conveys the idea of a flute bored through, and furnished with holes (*Gesenius*); or from חָלַל *hhâlăl, to leap or dance;* and thence it

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conveys the idea of an instrument that was played on at the dance.—*Pfeiffer.* The Greek translators have always rendered it by αὐλός. There are, in all, but four places where it occurs in the Old Testament; 1 Kings i. 40; Isa. v. 12; xxx. 29; Jer. xlviii. 36; and it is uniformly rendered *pipe* or *pipes,* by our translators. The origin of the pipe is unknown. It was possessed by most ancient nations, though it differed much in form. It was made sometimes of wood, at others of reed, at others of the bones of animals, horns, &c. The *box-wood* has been the common material out of which it was made. It was sometimes used for plaintive music (comp. Matt. ix. 23); but it was also employed in connection with other instruments, while journeying up to Jerusalem to attend the great feasts there; see Note on Isa. xxx. 29. Though employed on plaintive occasions, yet it was also employed in times of joy and pleasure. Hence, in the times of Judas Maccabeus, the Jews complained 'that all joy had vanished from Jacob, and that the flute and cithera were silent;' 1 Mac. iii. 45; see *Bib. Repos.* vol. vi. pp. 387–392. The following graceful figures will show the manner of playing the flute or pipe among the Greeks.

Greek Flute Players.

It was also a common art to play the double flute or pipe, in the East, in the manner represented in the cut on next page. In the use of these instruments, in itself, there could be no impropriety. That which the prophet rebuked was, that they employed them not for praise, or even for innocent amusement, but that they introduced them to their feasts of revelry, and thus made them the occasion of forgetting God. Forgetfulness of God, in connection with music and dancing, is beautifully described by Job:

They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance;
They take the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the organ;
They spend their days in mirth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.
And they say unto God—
'Depart from us;
For we know not the knowledge of thy ways.
What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?'
Job xxi. 11–15.

¶ *In their feasts.* 'The Nabathæans of Arabia Petrea always introduced music at their entertainments (*Strabo,* xvi.), and the custom seems to have been very general among the ancients. They are mentioned as having been essential among the Greeks, from the earliest times; and are pronounced by Homer to be requisite at a feast:

Μολπή τ' ὀρχηστύς τε· τὰ γάρ τ' ἀναθήματα δαιτός. *Od.* i. 152.

Aristoxenus, quoted by Plutarch, *De*

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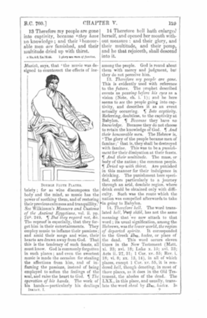

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER V. 129

13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because [a]they have no knowledge; and their [1]honourable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

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.

a Ho.4.6; Lu.19.44. 1 glory are men of famine.

Musicô, says, that 'the music was designed to counteract the effects of inebriety; for as wine discomposes the body and the mind, so music has the power of soothing them, and of restoring their previous calmness and tranquillity.' See Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii. pp. 248, 249. ¶ *But they regard not*, &c. The reproof is especially, that they forget him in their entertainments. They employ music to inflame their passions; and amid their songs and wine, their hearts are drawn away from God. That this is the tendency of such feasts, all must know. God is commonly forgotten in such places; and even the sweetest music is made the occasion for stealing the affections from him, and of inflaming the passions, instead of being employed to soften the feelings of the soul, and raise the heart to God. ¶ *The operation of his hands.* The work of his hands—particularly his dealings among the people. God is round about them with mercy and judgment, but they do not perceive him.

DOUBLE FLUTE PLAYER.

13. *Therefore my people are gone.* This is evidently used with reference to the *future*. The prophet described events as *passing before his eyes* as a vision (Note, ch. i. 1); and he here seems to *see* the people going into captivity, and describes it as an event actually occurring. ¶ *Into captivity.* Referring, doubtless, to the captivity at Babylon. ¶ *Because* they have no *knowledge*. Because they do not choose to retain the knowledge of God. ¶ *And their honourable men.* The Hebrew is, 'The glory of the people became men of famine;' that is, they shall be destroyed with famine. This was to be a *punishment* for their dissipation at their feasts. ¶ *And their multitude.* The mass, or body of the nation; the common people. ¶ *Dried up with thirst.* Are punished in this manner for their indulgence in drinking. The punishment here specified, refers particularly to a journey through an arid, desolate region, where drink could be obtained only with difficulty. Such was the route which the nation was compelled afterwards to take in going to Babylon.

14. *Therefore hell.* The word translated *hell*, שְׁאוֹל *shĕôl*, has not the same meaning that we now attach to that word; its usual signification, among the Hebrews, was *the lower world, the region of departed spirits.* It corresponded to the Greek ᾍδης, *hades*, or place of the dead. This word occurs eleven times in the New Testament (Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18; Luke x. 15; xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27, 31; 1 Cor. xv. 55; Rev. i. 18; vi. 8; xx. 13, 14), in all of which places, except 1 Cor. xv. 55, it is rendered *hell*, though denoting, in most of those places, as it does in the Old Testament, the abodes of the dead. The LXX., in this place, and usually, translate the word *sheol* by ᾍδης, *hades*. It

ISAIAH. I. 9

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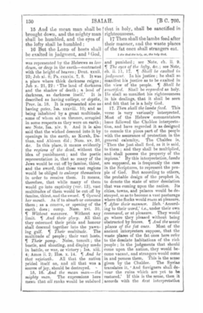

130 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

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:

16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and [1]God, that is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness.

17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

1 the God the holy, or, the holy God.

was represented by the Hebrews as *low down*, or *deep* in the earth—contrasted with the height of heaven; Deut. xxxii. 22; Job xi. 8; Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8. It was a place where thick darkness reigns; Job x. 21, 22: 'The land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself.' It is described as having *valleys*, or *depths*, Prov. ix. 18. It is represented also as having *gates*, Isa. xxxviii. 10; and as being inhabited by a great multitude, some of whom sit on thrones, occupied in some respects as they were on earth; see Note, Isa. xiv. 9. And it is also said that the wicked descend into it by openings in the earth, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did; Num. xv. 30, &c. In this place, it means evidently the *regions of the dead*, without the idea of punishment; and the poetic representation is, that so many of the Jews would be cut off by famine, thirst, and the sword, that those vast regions would be obliged *to enlarge themselves* in order to receive them. It means, therefore, that while many of them would go into captivity (ver. 13), vast multitudes of them would be cut off by famine, thirst, and the sword. ¶ *Opened her mouth.* As if to absorb or consume them; as a *cavern*, or opening of the earth does; comp. Num. xvi. 30. ¶ *Without measure.* Without any limit. ¶ *And their glory.* All that they esteemed their pride and honour shall descend together into the yawning gulf. ¶ *Their multitude.* The multitude of people; their vast hosts. ¶ *Their pomp.* Noise, tumult; the bustle, and shouting, and display made in battle, or war, or victory; Isa. xiii. 4; Amos ii. 2; Hos. x. 14. ¶ *And he that rejoiceth.* All that the nation prided itself on, and all that was a source of joy, should be destroyed.

15, 16. *And the mean man—the mighty man.* The expressions here mean that *all* ranks would be subdued and punished; see Note, ch. ii. 9. ¶ *The eyes of the lofty*, &c.; see Note, ch. ii. 11, 17. ¶ *Shall be exalted in judgment.* In his justice; he shall so manifest his justice as to be exalted in the view of the people. ¶ *Shall be sanctified.* Shall be *regarded* as holy. He shall so manifest his righteousness in his dealings, that it shall be seen and felt that he is a holy God.

17. *Then shall the lambs feed.* This verse is very variously interpreted. Most of the Hebrew commentators have followed the Chaldee interpretation, and have regarded it as designed to console the pious part of the people with the assurance of protection in the general calamity. The Chaldee is, 'Then the just shall feed, as it is said, to them; and they shall be multiplied, and shall possess the property of the impious.' By this interpretation, *lambs* are supposed, as is frequently the case in the Scriptures, to represent the people of God. But according to others, the probable design of the prophet is, to denote the state of utter desolation that was coming upon the nation. Its cities, towns, and palaces would be destroyed, so as to become a vast pasturage where the flocks would roam at pleasure. ¶ *After their manner.* Heb. 'According to their *word*,' *i.e.*, under their own *command*, or at pleasure. They would go where they pleased without being obstructed by fences. ¶ *And the waste places of the fat ones.* Most of the ancient interpreters suppose, that the waste places of the fat ones here refer to the desolate habitations of the rich people; in the judgments that should come upon the nation, they would become vacant, and strangers would come in and possess them. This is the sense given by the Chaldee. The Syriac translates it, 'And foreigners shall devour the ruins which are yet to be restored.' If this is the sense, then it accords with the *first* interpretation

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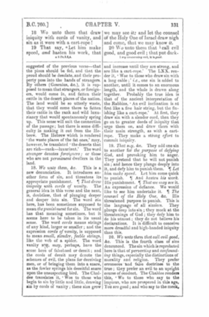

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER V. 131

18 Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope!

19 That say, [a]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*.

20 Wo unto them that [1]call evil good, and good evil; that put dark-

a 2 Pe.3.3,4. 1 say concerning evil, It is good.

suggested of the previous verse—that the pious should be fed, and that the proud should be desolate, and their property pass into the hands of strangers. By others (Gesenius, &c.), it is supposed to mean that strangers, or foreigners, would come in, and fatten their cattle in the desert places of the nation. The land would be so utterly waste, that they would come there to fatten their cattle in the rank and wild luxuriancy that would spontaneously spring up. This sense will suit the connection of the passage; but there is some difficulty in making it out from the Hebrew. The Hebrew which is rendered 'the waste places of the fat ones,' may, however, be translated 'the deserts that are rich—rank—luxuriant.' The word *stranger* denotes *foreigners*; or those who are not *permanent* dwellers in the land.

18. *Wo unto them*, &c. This is a new denunciation. It introduces another form of sin, and threatens its appropriate punishment. ¶ *That draw iniquity with cords of vanity.* The general idea in this verse and the next, is, doubtless, that of plunging deeper and deeper into sin. The word *sin* here, has been sometimes supposed to mean *the punishment* for sin. The word has that meaning sometimes, but it seems here to be taken in its usual sense. The word *cords* means strings of any kind, larger or smaller; and the expression *cords of vanity*, is supposed to mean *small, slender, feeble* strings, like the web of a spider. The word vanity שָׁוְא, may, perhaps, have the sense here of falsehood or deceit; and the cords of deceit may denote the schemes of evil, the plans for deceiving men, or of bringing them into a snare, as the fowler springs his deceitful snare upon the unsuspecting bird. The Chaldee translates it, 'Woe to those who begin to sin by little and little, drawing sin by cords of vanity; these sins grow and increase until they are strong, and are like a cart-rope.' The LXX. render it, 'Woe to those who draw sin with a long cable;' *i.e.*, one sin is added to another, until it comes to an enormous length, and the whole is drawn along together. Probably the true idea is that of the ancient interpretation of the Rabbins, 'An evil inclination is at first like a fine hair string, but the finishing like a cart-rope.' At first, they draw sin with a slender cord, then they go on to greater deeds of iniquity that urge them on, and draw them with their main strength, as with a cart-rope. They make a strong *effort* to commit iniquity.

19. *That say*, &c. They add one sin to another for *the purpose* of *defying* God, and provoking him to anger. They pretend that he will not punish sin; and hence they plunge deeply into it, and defy him to punish them. ¶ *Let him make speed.* Let him come quick to punish. ¶ And *hasten his work.* His punishment. ¶ *That we may see* it. An expression of defiance. We would like to see him undertake it. ¶ *The counsel of the Holy One*, &c. His threatened purpose to punish. This is the language of all sinners. They plunge deep into sin; they mock at the threatenings of God; they defy him to do his utmost; they do not believe his declarations. It is difficult to conceive more dreadful and high-handed iniquity than this.

20. *Wo unto them that call evil good*, &c. This is the fourth class of sins denounced. The sin which is reprobated here is that of *perverting* and *confounding* things, especially the distinctions of morality and religion. They prefer erroneous and false doctrines to the true; they prefer an evil to an upright course of conduct. The Chaldee renders this, 'Wo to those who say to the impious, who are prospered in this age, You are good; and who say to the meek,

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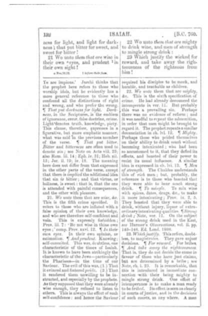

132 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

ness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Wo unto *them that are* wise in their own [a]eyes, and prudent [1]in their own sight!

22 Wo unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

a Pro.26.12. 1 before their face.

Ye are impious.' Jarchi thinks that the prophet here refers to those who worship idols, but he evidently has a more general reference to those who confound all the distinctions of right and wrong, and who prefer the wrong. ¶ *That put darkness for light.* *Darkness*, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of ignorance, error, false doctrine, crime. Light denotes truth, knowledge, piety. This clause, therefore, expresses in a figurative, but more emphatic manner, what was said in the previous member of the verse. ¶ *That put bitter.* *Bitter* and *bitterness* are often used to *denote sin*; see Note on Acts viii. 23; also Rom. iii. 14; Eph. iv. 31; Heb. xii. 15; Jer. ii. 19; iv. 18. The meaning here does not differ from that expressed in the other parts of the verse, except that there is *implied* the additional idea that sin *is* bitter; and that virtue, or holiness, is sweet: that is, that the one is attended with painful consequences, and the other with pleasure.

21. *Wo unto* them that are *wise*, &c. This is the fifth crime specified. It refers to those who are inflated with a false opinion of their own knowledge, and who are therefore self-confident and vain. This is expressly forbidden; Prov. iii. 7: 'Be not wise in thine own eyes;' comp. Prov. xxvi. 12. ¶ *In their own eyes.* In their own opinion, or estimation. ¶ *And prudent.* Knowing; self-conceited. This was, doubtless, one characteristic of the times of Isaiah. It is known to have been strikingly the characteristic of the Jews—particularly the Pharisees—in the time of our Saviour. The evil of this was, (1.) That it evinced and fostered *pride*. (2.) That it rendered them unwilling to be instructed, and especially by the prophets. As they supposed that they were already wise enough, they refused to listen to others. This is always the effect of such self-confidence: and hence the Saviour required his disciples to be meek, and humble, and teachable as children.

22. *Wo unto* them that are *mighty*, &c. This is the sixth specification of crime. He had already denounced the intemperate in ver. 11. But probably this was a prevailing sin. Perhaps there was no evidence of reform; and it was needful to *repeat* the admonition, in order that men might be brought to regard it. The prophet repeats a similar denunciation in ch. lvi. 12. ¶ *Mighty.* Perhaps those who prided themselves on their ability to drink much without becoming intoxicated; who had been so accustomed to it, that they defied its effects, and boasted of their power to resist its usual influence. A similar idea is expressed in ch. lvi. 12. ¶ *Men of strength.* The Chaldee understands this of *rich* men; but, probably, the reference is to those who boasted that they were able to bear much strong drink. ¶ *To mingle.* To mix wine with spices, dates, drugs, &c., to make it more intoxicating; Prov. ix. 2, 5. They boasted that they were able to drink, without injury, liquor of extraordinary intoxicating qualities. ¶ *Strong drink*; Note, ver. 11. On the subject of the strong drink used in the East, *see* Harmer's *Observations*, vol. ii. pp. 140–148. Ed. Lond. 1808.

23. *Which justify.* This refers, doubtless, to magistrates. They gave unjust decisions. ¶ *For reward.* For bribes. ¶ *And take away the righteousness.* That is, they do not decide the cause in favour of those who have just claims, but are determined by a bribe; see Note, ch. i. 23. It is remarkable, that this is introduced in immediate connection with their being mighty to mingle strong drink. One effect of intemperance is to make a man ready to be *bribed*. Its effect is seen as clearly in courts of justice, and in the decisions of such courts, as any where. A man

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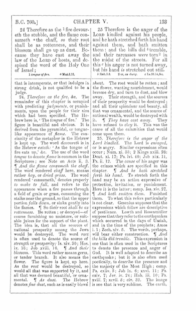

B.C. 700.] CHAPTER V. 133

24 Therefore as the [1]fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth [a]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;

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 [b]tremble, and their carcasses *were* torn[2] in the midst of the streets. For all this [c]his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still.

1 tongue of fire. a Mal.4.1. b Hab.3.6. 2 or, as dung. c Is.9.12,&c.

that is intemperate, or that indulges in strong drink, is not qualified to be a judge.

24. *Therefore as the fire*, &c. The remainder of this chapter is occupied with predicting *judgments*, or punishments, upon the people for their sins which had been specified. The Hebrew here is, 'The *tongue* of fire.' The figure is beautiful and obvious. It is derived from the pyramidal, or tongue-like appearance of *flame*. The concinnity of the metaphor in the Hebrew is kept up. The word *devoureth* is in the Hebrew *eateth*: 'As the tongue of fire eats up,' &c. The use of the word *tongue* to denote *flame* is common in the Scriptures; see Note on Acts ii. 3. ¶ *And the flame consumeth the chaff.* The word rendered *chaff* here, means rather *hay*, or *dried grass*. The word rendered 'consumeth,' denotes properly *to make to fall*, and refers to the appearance when a fire passes through a field of grain or grass, consuming the stalks near the ground, so that the upper portion *falls down*, or sinks gently into the flames. ¶ So *their root shall be as rottenness.* Be rotten; or decayed—of course furnishing no moisture, or suitable juices for the support of the plant. The idea is, that all the sources of national prosperity among the Jews would be destroyed. The word *root* is often used to denote the source of *strength or prosperity*; Is. xiv. 30; Hos. ix. 16; Job xviii. 16. ¶ *And their blossom.* This word rather means germ, or tender branch. It also means the flower. The figure is kept up here. As the *root* would be destroyed, so would all that was supported by it, and all that was deemed beautiful, or ornamental. ¶ *As dust.* The Hebrew denotes *fine dust*, such as is easily blown about. The root would be rotten; and the flower, wanting nourishment, would become dry, and turn to dust, and blow away. Their strength, and the sources of their prosperity would be destroyed; and all their splendour and beauty, all that was ornamental, and the source of national wealth, would be destroyed with it. ¶ *They have cast away.* They have refused to *obey* it. This was the cause of all the calamities that would come upon them.

25. *Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled.* The Lord is *enraged*, or is angry. Similar expressions often occur; Num. xi. 33; 2 Kings xxiii. 26; Deut. xi. 17; Ps. lvi. 40; Job xix. 11, Ps. ii. 12. The *cause* of his anger was the crimes which are specified in this chapter. ¶ *And he hath stretched forth his hand.* To stretch forth the hand may be an action expressive of protection, invitation, or punishment. Here it is the latter; comp. Isa. xiv. 27. ¶ *And hath smitten them.* Punished them. To what this refers particularly is not clear. Gesenius supposes that the expressions which follow are descriptive of pestilence. Lowth and Rosenmüller suppose that they refer to the earthquakes which occurred in the days of Uzziah, and in the time of the prophets; Amos i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5. The words, perhaps, will bear either construction. ¶ *And the hills did tremble.* This expression is one that is often used in the Scriptures to denote the presence and anger of God. It is well adapted to describe an earthquake; but it is also often used poetically, to describe the presence and the majesty of the Most High; comp. Ps. cxliv. 5; Job ix. 6; xxvi. 11; Ps. cxiv. 7; Jer. iv. 24; Hab. iii. 10; Ps. xviii. 7; xcvii. 5; civ. 32. The image is one that is very sublime. The earth,

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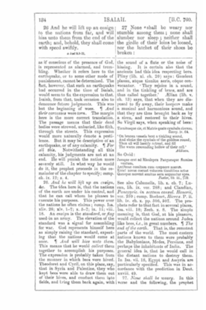

134 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

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.

27 None [a]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:

a Joel 2.7-11.

as if conscious of the presence of God, is represented as alarmed, and trembling. Whether it refers here to the earthquake, or to some other mode of punishment, cannot be determined. The fact, however, that such an earthquake had occurred in the time of Isaiah, would seem to fix the expression to that. Isaiah, from that, took occasion also to denounce future judgments. This was but the beginning of woes. ¶ *And their carcasses were torn.* The margin here is the more correct translation. The passage means that their *dead* bodies were strewed, unburied, like filth, through the streets. This expression would more naturally denote a pestilence. But it may be descriptive of an earthquake, or of any calamity. ¶ *For all this.* Notwithstanding all this calamity, his judgments are not at an end. He will punish the nation more severely still. In what way he would do it, the prophet proceeds in the remainder of the chapter to specify; comp. ch. ix. 12; x. 4.

26. *And he will lift up an ensign*, &c. The idea here is, that the nations of the earth are under his control, and that he can call whom he pleases to execute his purposes. This power over the nations he often claims; comp. Isa. xliv. 28; xlv. 1–7; x. 5–7; ix. 11; viii. 18. An *ensign* is the *standard*, or *flag* used in an army. The elevation of the standard was a signal for assembling for war. God represents himself here as simply raising the standard, expecting that the nations would come at once. ¶ *And will hiss unto them.* This means that he would *collect* them together to accomplish his purposes. The expression is probably taken from the manner in which bees were hived. Theodoret and Cyril, on this place, say, that in Syria and Palestine, they who kept bees were able to draw them out of their hives, and conduct them into fields, and bring them back again, with the sound of a flute or the noise of hissing. It is certain also that the ancients had this idea respecting bees. Pliny (lib. xi. ch. 20) says: Gaudent plausu, atque tinnitu aeris, eòque convocantur. 'They rejoice in a sound, and in the tinkling of brass, and are thus called together.' Ælian (lib. v. ch. 13) says, that when they are disposed to fly away, their keepers make a musical and harmonious sound, and that they are thus brought back as by a siren, and restored to their hives. So Virgil says, when speaking of bees:

Tinnitusque cie, et Matris quate cymbala circum.
Georg. iv. 64.

'On brazen vessels beat a tinkling sound,
And shake the cymbals of the goddess round;
Then all will hastily retreat, and fill
The warm resounding hollow of their cell.'
Addison.

So Ovid:

Jamque erat ad Rhodopen Pangæaque flumina ventum,
Aeriferae comitum cum crepuere manus.
Ecce! novae coeunt volucres tinnitibus actae
Quosque movent sonitus aera sequuntur apes.
Fastor, lib. iii., 739.

See also Columella, lib. x. ch. 7; Lucan, lib. ix. ver. 288; and Claudian, *Panegyric. in sextum consul. Honorii*, ver. 259; comp. Bochart, *Hieroz.* P. ii. lib. iv. ch. x. pp. 506, 507. The prophets refer to that fact in several places, Isa. viii. 18; Zech. x. 8. The simple meaning is, that God, at his pleasure, would collect the nations around Judea like bees, *i.e.*, in great numbers. ¶ *The end of the earth.* That is, the remotest parts of the world. The most eastern nations known to them were probably the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and perhaps the inhabitants of India. The general idea is, that he would call in the distant nations to destroy them. In Isa. vii. 18, Egypt and Assyria are particularly specified. This was in accordance with the prediction in Deut. xxviii. 49.

27. *None shall be weary.* In this verse and the following, the prophet

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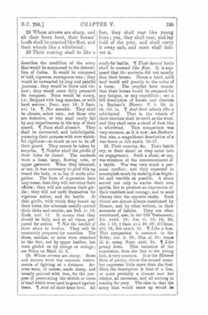

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER V. 135

28 Whose arrows *are* sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:

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*.

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describes the condition of the army that would be summoned to the destruction of Judea. It would be composed of bold, vigorous, courageous men; they would be unwearied by long and painful journies; they would be fierce and violent; they would come fully prepared for conquest. None would be *weary*, *i.e.*, fatigued with long marches, or with hard service; Deut. xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvi. 14. ¶ *Nor stumble.* They shall be chosen, select men; not those who are defective, or who shall easily fall by any impediments in the way of their march. ¶ *None shall slumber.* They shall be unwearied, and indefatigable, pursuing their purpose with ever watchful vigilance—so much as not to be off their guard. They cannot be taken by surprise. ¶ *Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed.* The ancients wore a loose, large, flowing robe, or upper garment. When they laboured, or ran, it was necessary to *gird* this up round the body, or to lay it aside altogether. The form of expression here may mean, that they will not relax their efforts; they will not unloose their girdle; they will not unfit themselves for vigorous action, and for battle. In that girdle, with which they bound up their robes, the orientals usually carried their dirks and swords; see Neh. iv. 18; Ezek. xxii. 15. It means that they should be fully, and at all times, prepared for action. ¶ *Nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.* They will be constantly prepared for marches. The shoes, sandals, or *soles* were attached to the feet, not by upper leather, but were girded on by thongs or strings; see Notes on Matt. iii. 2.

28. *Whose arrows are sharp.* Bows and arrows were the common instruments of fighting at a distance. Arrows were, of course, made sharp, and usually pointed with iron, for the purpose of penetrating the shields or coats of mail which were used to guard against them. ¶ *And all their bows bent.* All ready for battle. ¶ *Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint.* It is supposed that the ancients did not usually shoe their horses. Hence a hard, solid hoof would add greatly to the value of a horse. The prophet here means, that their horses would be prepared for any fatigue, or any expedition; see a full description of horses and chariots in Bochart's *Hieroz.* P. i. lib. ii. ch. viii. ix. ¶ *And their wheels like a whirlwind.* That is, the wheels of their chariots shall be swift as the wind, and they shall raise a cloud of dust like a whirlwind. This comparison was very common, as it is now; see *Bochart.* See, also, a magnificent description of a war-horse in Job xxxix. 19–25.

29. *Their roaring, &c.* Their battle cry, or their shout as they enter into an engagement. Such a *shout*, or cry, was common at the commencement of a battle. War was very much a personal conflict; and they expected to accomplish much by making it as frightful and terrible as possible. A shout served not only to excite their own spirits, but to produce an impression of their numbers and courage, and to send dismay into the opposite ranks. Such *shouts* are almost always mentioned by Homer, and by other writers, in their accounts of battles. They are often mentioned, also, in the Old Testament; Ex. xxxii. 18; Jos. vi. 10, 16, 20; Jer. l. 15; 1 Sam. xvii. 20, 52; 2 Chron. xiii. 15; Job xxxix. 25. ¶ *Like a lion.* This comparison is common in the Bible; Jer. li. 38; Hos. xi. 10; Amos iii. 4; comp. Num. xxiii. 24. ¶ *Like young lions.* This variation of the expression, from the lion to the young lion, is very common. It is the Hebrew form of poetry, where the second member expresses little more than the first. Here the description is that of a lion, or more probably a *lioness* and her whelps, all ravenous, and all uniting in roaring for prey. The idea is, that the army that would come up would be

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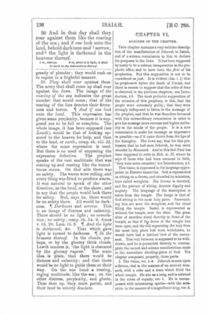

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30 And in that day shall they roar against them like the roaring of the sea; and if *one* look unto the land, behold darkness *and* [1] sorrow, and [2] the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

[1] or, *distress.* [2] or, *when it is light, it shall be dark in the destructions thereof.*

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greedy of plunder; they would rush on to rapine in a frightful manner.

30. *They shall roar against them.* The army that shall come up shall roar against the Jews. The image of *the roaring of the sea* indicates the great number that would come; that of the roaring of the *lion* denotes their fierceness and terror. ¶ *And if one look unto the land.* This expression has given some perplexity, because it is supposed not to be full or complete. The whole image, it has been supposed (see *Lowth*), would be that of looking *upward* to the heaven for help, and then to the land, *or earth;* comp. ch. viii. 22, where the same expression is used. But there is no need of supposing the expression defective. The prophet speaks of the vast multitude that was coming up and roaring like the tumultuous *ocean*. On *that* side there was no safety. The waves were rolling, and every thing was fitted to produce alarm. It was natural to speak of the *other* direction, as the *land*, or the shore; and to say that the people would look there for safety. But, says he, there would be no safety there. All would be darkness. ¶ *Darkness* and *sorrow.* This is an image of distress and calamity. There should be no light; no consolation; no safety; comp. ch. lix. 9; Amos v. 18, 20; Lam. iii. 2. ¶ *And the light is darkened, &c.* That which gave light is turned to darkness. ¶ *In the heavens thereof.* In the *clouds*, perhaps, or by the gloomy thick clouds. Lowth renders it, 'the light is obscured by the gloomy vapour.' The main idea is plain, that there would be distress and calamity; and that there would be no light to guide them on their way. On the one hand a roaring, raging multitude, like the sea; on the other distress, perplexity, and gloom. Thus shut up, they must perish, and their land be utterly desolate.

CHAPTER VI.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter contains a very sublime description of the manifestation of Jehovah to Isaiah, and of a solemn commission to him to declare his purposes to the Jews. It has been supposed by many to be a solemn *inauguration* to the prophetic office, and to have been the *first* of his prophecies. But this supposition is not to be considered as just. It is evident (Isa. i. 1) that he prophesied *before* the death of Uzziah, and there is reason to suppose that the order of *time* is observed in the previous chapters; see Introduction, § 2. The most probable supposition of the occasion of this prophecy, is this, that the people were extremely guilty; that they were strongly indisposed to listen to the message of the prophet, and that he was therefore favoured with this extraordinary commission in order to give his message more success and higher authority in the minds of the people. It is a new commission to make his message as impressive as possible—as if it came direct from the lips of the Almighty. The Jews say, that for this pretension that he had seen Jehovah, he was sawn asunder by *Manasseh*. And to this fact Paul has been supposed to refer in Heb. xi. 37, where he says of those who had been eminent in faith, 'they were sawn asunder;' see Introduction, § 2.

This vision is expressed in the language appropriate to Eastern monarchs. God is represented as sitting on a *throne*, and attended by ministers, here called seraphim. His throne is elevated, and the posture of sitting denotes dignity and majesty. The language of the description is taken from the temple. The image is that of God sitting in the most holy place. Surrounding him are seen the seraphim, and the cloud filling the temple. Isaiah is represented as without the temple, near the altar. The great altar of sacrifice stood directly in front of the temple, so that if the doors of the temple had been open, and the veil separating the holy from the most holy place had been withdrawn, he would have had a distinct view of the mercy-seat. That veil between is supposed to be withdrawn, and he is permitted directly to contemplate the sacred and solemn manifestation made in the immediate dwelling-place of God. The chapter comprises, properly, three parts.

I. The vision, ver. 1–4. Jehovah is seen upon a throne, clad in the manner of an ancient monarch, with a robe and a train which filled the whole temple. He sits as a king, and is adorned in the robes of royalty, ver. 1. He is encompassed with ministering spirits—with the seraphim, in the manner of a magnificent king, ver. 2.

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They are seen, by the prophet, to be solemnly engaged in his worship, and to stand in the attitude of the most profound veneration, ver. 3. So awful and sublime was the worship, that even the posts of the temple were moved; the whole sacred edifice trembled at the presence of God, and at the voice of those who were engaged in his praise; and the whole temple was filled with the symbol of the Divine presence and majesty, ver. 4.

II. The *effect on the prophet*, ver. 5–7. He was overcome with a sense of his unworthiness, and felt that he could not live. He had seen Jehovah, and he felt that he was a ruined man, ver. 5. Yet one of the seraphim flew to the altar, and bore thence a live coal, and touched his lips, and assured him that his sin was taken away, and that he was pardoned, ver. 6, 7.

III. The *commission of the prophet*, ver. 8–13. God inquires who will go for him to the people, and bear his message, and the prophet expresses his readiness to do it, ver. 8. The nature of the message is stated, ver. 9, 10. The *duration*—the state of things which he predicted would follow from this—is asked, and the answer is returned, ver. 11–13. It was to be until utter desolation should spread over the land, and the mass of the nation was cut off, and all were destroyed, except the small portion which it was necessary to preserve, in order to prevent the nation from becoming wholly extinct.

IN the year [a]that king Uzziah died, I saw [b]the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and [1]his train filled the temple.

a 2Ki.15.7. b Jno.12.41. 1 or, *the skirts thereof.*

CHAPTER VI.

1. *In the year.* This naturally denotes a period *after* the death of Uzziah, though in the same year. The mention of the time was evidently made when the prophecy was composed, and it is to be presumed that the death of Uzziah *had* occurred at the time when the prophet saw this vision. If so, it is clear that this was not the *first* of his prophecies, for he saw his visions 'in *the days of* Uzziah;' ch. i. 1. The Chaldee, however, reads this: 'in the year when Uzziah was smitten with the leprosy;' and most of the Jewish commentators so understand it; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 20. The Rabbins say that the meaning is, that he then became *civilly* dead, by ceasing to exercise his functions as a king, and that he was cut off as a leprous man from all connection with the people, and from all authority; see Introduction, § 3. This is, doubtless, true; but still, the more natural signification is, that this occurred in the year in which he actually died. ¶ *I saw.* That is, he saw in a *vision;* see Introduction, § 7, (4.) A similar vision is described by Micaiah; 1 Kings xxii. 19; see also Amos vii. 1; viii. 1; ix. 1; Dan. vii. 13, &c. ¶ *The Lord.* In the original here the word is not *Jehovah*, but אדני *Adonai;* see Notes on ch. i. 24. Here it is applied to JEHOVAH; see also Ps. cxiv. 7, where it is also so applied; and see Isa. viii. 7, and Job xxviii. 28, where JEHOVAH calls himself *Adonai*. The word does not itself denote essential divinity; but it is often applied to God. In some MSS., however, of Kennicott and De Rossi, the word JEHOVAH is found. We may make two remarks here. (1.) That Isaiah evidently meant to say that it was JEHOVAH who appeared to him. He is expressly so called in ver. 5, 8, 11. (2.) It is equally clear, from the New Testament, that Isaiah saw THE MESSIAH. John quotes the words in this chapter, ver. 10, as applicable to Jesus Christ, and then adds (John xii. 41), 'these things said Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him.' An inspired man has thus settled this as referring to the Messiah, and thus had established the propriety of applying to him the name JEHOVAH, *i.e.*, has affirmed that the Lord Jesus is Divine. Jerome says, that this vision was designed to represent the doctrine of the Trinity.—In John i. 18, it is said, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' In Ex. xxxiii. 20, God says, 'Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live;' see also 1 Tim. vi. 16. These passages may be reconciled with what is here said by Isaiah, in the following manner:—(1.) Isaiah does not say that he saw the Divine essence; and all that his words fairly imply, is, that he saw a manifestation, or vision of JEHOVAH—some striking symbolical representation

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2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he [a]covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

a Eze.1.11.

of him. (2.) It was the manifestation of JEHOVAH in the person of the Messiah, of the 'only begotten Son who hath revealed or declared him,' that he saw. Such manifestations of God have been made often, and all that the declaration of Isaiah implies, of necessity, is, that he had a vision of God incarnate seated in glory, from whom he now received a new commission to go out and proclaim the truth to that wicked and rebellious generation. ¶ *Sitting upon a throne.* God is thus often represented as a king, sitting on a throne; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Ezek. xliii. 7; Jer. xvii. 12. ¶ *High and lifted up.* That is, the *throne;* an indication of state and majesty. ¶ *And his train.* The word *train* שוליו, properly signifies the skirt of a garment, or a robe; Ex. xxviii. 33, 34. Here it is evidently designed as a representation of a large, flowing robe, that filled all the most holy part of the temple. The Orientals regarded such large robes as indicative of grandeur and state. The Messiah was seen seated on a throne as a king; clothed in a large, loose, flowing robe, in the manner of oriental monarchs, and surrounded by his ministers. The design of this magnificent vision was not only to impress the prophet with a sense of the holiness of God, but also to give additional weight to his commission, as having been derived immediately from the Divine majesty; comp. ver. 9, 10. It is remarkable that Isaiah attempts no representation of JEHOVAH himself. He mentions his robes; the throne; the seraphim; but mentions no form or appearance of God himself. In this there is great sublimity. There is enough mentioned to fill the mind with awe; there is enough concealed to impress us deeply with a sense of the Divine majesty. It is remarkable, also, that it is not the *usual* appearance of God in the temple to which he refers. That was the *Shekinah*, or visible symbol of God. That was on the mercy-seat, this was on a throne; that was a cloud, of this no form is mentioned; over that the cherubim stretched forth their wings, over this stood the seraphim; that had no clothing, this was clad in a full flowing robe. ¶ *Filled the temple.* Probably, the most holy place only is intended. The large, full, magnificent robe seemed to fill up the entire holy of holies. Some have supposed that this vision was represented as appearing in the *heavens*. But the expression here evidently implies, that it was seen in the *temple* at Jerusalem.

2. *Above it.* Either above the throne, or above him. The LXX. render it, 'Round about him'—κύκλῳ αὐτοῦ. The Chaldee, 'The holy ministers stood on high in his presence.' ¶ *The seraphims.* The verb שרף *sâraph*, from which this word is derived, is uniformly translated *to burn*, and is used frequently; see *Taylor*. The noun שרף denotes, according to Bochart, the *chersydros*, a serpent that lives in lakes and moist places; but when those places are dried up, it becomes a land serpent, and then its bite is very fierce, and is attended with a most dreadful inflammation all over the body. Rabbi Solomon says, that 'serpents are called *seraphim* because they burn men with the poison of their teeth,' perhaps because the idea of *heat* and *poison* were connected. The word is applied to the fiery flying serpents which bit the children of Israel, and in imitation of which a brazen serpent was erected on a pole by Moses. It is translated 'a fiery serpent' in Num. xxi. 8; Isa. xiv. 29; xxx. 6. In Deut. viii. 15; Num. xxi. 6, it is rendered 'fiery,' and in the passage before us, *seraphims*. The word שרף often occurs in the sense of *burning;* Deut. xxix. 23; 2 Chron. xvi. 14; xxi. 19, &c. The LXX. render it *seraphim*, σεραφίμ; so the Vulgate and the Syriac. The Chaldee, 'his holy ministers.' Probably it is now impossible to tell why this name was given to the representations that appeared to Isaiah. Perhaps it may have been from their *burning* ardour and zeal in the service of God; perhaps from the *rapidity* of their

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3 And [1]one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; the [2]whole earth *is* full of his glory.

1 *this cried to this.* 2 *his glory is the fulness of the whole earth.*

motion in his service—derived from the rapid motion of the serpent. Gesenius supposes that the name was derived from a signification of the word denoting *noble* or *excellent*, and that it was on this account applied to princes, and to celestial beings. Kimchi says, that the name was given with reference to their bright, shining appearance; comp. Ezek. i. 13; 2 Kings ii. 2; vi. 17. The word is applied to celestial beings no where else, except in this chapter. There is no reason to think that the seraphim described here partook of the *form* of the serpent, as the representation seems to be rather that of a man. Thus each one (ver. 2) is represented as covering his *face* and his *feet* with his wings—a description that does not pertain to the serpentine form. God is usually represented as surrounded or encompassed by heavenly beings, as his ministers; Ps. civ. 4; Dan. vii. 10; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Ps. lxviii. 17; Heb. xii. 22. The idea is one of peculiar magnificence and grandeur. It is derived especially from the customs of monarchs, particularly Eastern monarchs, who had numerous princes and nobles to attend them, and to give magnificence to their court. ¶ *Each one had six wings.* Wings are emblematic of the *rapidity* of their movement; the number here, perhaps, denoting their celerity and readiness to do the will of God. ¶ *With twain he covered his face.* This is designed, doubtless, to denote the *reverence* and *awe* inspired by the immediate presence of God; comp. Amos vi. 9, 10. The Chaldee adds, 'He covered his face *so that he could not see.*' To cover the face in this manner is the natural expression of reverence; comp. Note on ch. iii. 15. And if the pure and holy seraphim evinced such reverence in the presence of Jehovah, with what profound awe and veneration should we, polluted and sinful creatures, presume to draw near to him! Assuredly their position should reprove our presumption when we rush thoughtlessly and irreverently into his presence, and should teach us to bow with lowly veneration and deep humility; comp. Rev. iv. 9–11. ¶ *He covered his feet.* In a similar description of the cherubim in Ezek. i. 11, it is said that they covered *their bodies*. In Isaiah, the expression clearly denotes not the feet only, but the lower extremities. This was also an expression of reverence drawn from our conceptions of propriety. The seraphim stood covered, or as if *concealing themselves* as much as possible, in token of their nothingness and unworthiness in the presence of the Holy One. ¶ *He did fly.* He was quick to execute the commands of God. It may be observed, also, that among the ancients, *Mercury*, the messenger of Jupiter, was always represented with wings. Milton has copied this description of the seraphim:

'A seraph winged:—six wings he wore to shade
His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold,
And colours dipt in heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
Sky-tinctured grain.'

Par. Lost, Book v.

3. *And one cried to another.* Heb. 'This cried to this.' That is, they cried to each other in alternate responses. One cried 'holy;' the second repeated it; then the third; and then they probably united in the grand chorus, 'Full is all the earth of his glory.' This was an ancient mode of singing or recitative among the Hebrews; see Ex. xv. 20, 21, where Miriam is represented as going before in the dance with a timbrel, and the other females as following her, and *answering*, or responding to her, Ps. cxxxvi. 1; comp. Lowth, *on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Lect. xix. ¶ *Holy, holy, holy.* The *repetition* of a name, or of an expression, three times, was quite common among the Jews. Thus, in Jer. vii. 4, the Jews are represented by the prophet as saying, 'the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these.' Thus, Jer. xxii. 29: 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord;' Ezek.

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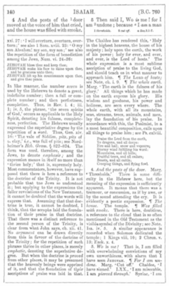

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4 And the posts of the [1]door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Wo *is* me! for I am [2]undone; because [a] I *am* a man

1 thresholds. 2 cut off. a [illegible]

xxi. 27: 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn;' see also 1 Sam. xviii. 33: 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son;' see also the repetition of the form of benediction among the Jews, Num. vi. 24-26:

JEHOVAH bless thee and keep thee;
JEHOVAH make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;
JEHOVAH lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

In like manner, the number *seven* is used by the Hebrews to denote a great, indefinite number; then a full or complete number; and then perfectness, completion. Thus, in Rev. i. 4; iii. 1; iv. 5, the phrase, 'the seven spirits of God,' occurs as applicable to the Holy Spirit, denoting his fulness, completeness, perfection. The Hebrews usually expressed the superlative degree by the repetition of a word. Thus, Gen. xiv. 10: 'The vale of Siddim, *pits, pits* of clay,' *i.e.*, was full of pits; see Nordheimer's *Heb. Gram.* § 822-824. The form was used, therefore, among the Jews, to denote *emphasis;* and the expression means in itself no more than 'thrice holy;' that is, supremely holy. Most commentators, however, have supposed that there is here a reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not probable that the Jews so understood it; but applying to the expressions the fuller revelations of the New Testament, it cannot be doubted that the words will express that. Assuming that that doctrine is true, it cannot be doubted, I think, that the seraphs laid the foundation of their praise in that doctrine. That there was a distinct reference to the second person of the Trinity, is clear from what John says, ch. xii. 41. No *argument* can be drawn directly from this in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity; for the repetition of such phrases thrice in other places, is merely *emphatic*, denoting the superlative degree. But when the doctrine is *proved* from other places, it may be presumed that the heavenly beings were apprised of it, and that the foundation of their ascriptions of praise was laid in that. The Chaldee has rendered this, 'Holy in the highest heavens, the house of his majesty; holy upon the earth, the work of his power; holy for ever, and ever, and ever, is the Lord of hosts.' The whole expression is a most sublime ascription of praise to the living God, and should teach us in what manner to approach him. ¶ *The* LORD *of hosts;* see Note, ch. i. 9. ¶ *The whole earth.* Marg. 'The earth is the fulness of his glory.' All things which he has made on the earth express his glory. His wisdom and goodness, his power and holiness, are seen every where. The whole earth, with all its mountains, seas, streams, trees, animals, and men, lay the foundation of his praise. In accordance with this, the Psalmist, in a most beautiful composition, calls upon all things to praise him; see Ps. cxlviii.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons, and all deeps:
Fire and hail; snow and vapours;
Stormy wind fulfilling his word:
Mountains, and all hills;
Fruitful trees, and all cedars;
Beasts, and all cattle;
Creeping things, and flying fowl.

4. *And the posts of the door.* Marg. 'Thresholds.' There is some difficulty in the Hebrew here, but the meaning of the expression is sufficiently apparent. It means that there was a tremour, or concussion, as if by awe, or by the sound attending the cry. It is evidently a poetic expression. ¶ *The house.* The temple. ¶ *Was filled with smoke.* There is here, doubtless, a reference to *the cloud* that is so often mentioned in the Old Testament as the visible symbol of the Divinity; see Note, Isa. iv. 5. A similar appearance is recorded when Solomon dedicated the temple; 1 Kings viii. 10; 2 Chron. v. 13; Ezek. x. 4.

5. *Wo is me!* That is, I am filled with overwhelming convictions of my own unworthiness, with alarm that I have seen JEHOVAH. ¶ *For I am undone.* Marg. 'Cut off.' Chaldee, 'I have sinned.' LXX., 'I am miserable, I am *pierced through*.' Syriac, 'I am

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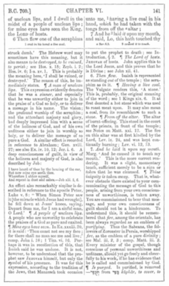

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER VI. 141

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.

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, [1]having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the [a]altar;

7 And he [2]laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy

1 and in his hand a live coal. a Rev.8.3. 2 caused it to touch.

struck dumb.' The Hebrew word may sometimes have this meaning, but it also means *to be destroyed, to be ruined, to perish;* see Hos. x. 15; Zeph. i. 2; Hos. iv. 6; Isa. xv. 1. This is probably the meaning here, 'I shall be ruined, or destroyed.' The reason of this, he immediately states. ¶ *A man of unclean lips.* This expression evidently denotes that he was a *sinner*, and especially that he was unworthy either to join in the praise of a God so holy, or to deliver a message in his name. The vision; the profound worship of the seraphim; and the attendant majesty and glory, had deeply impressed him with a sense of the holiness of God, and of his own unfitness either to join in worship so holy, or to deliver the message of so pure a God. A similar effect is recorded in reference to Abraham; Gen. xviii. 27; see also Ex. iv. 10, 12; Jer. i. 6. A deep consciousness of guilt, in view of the holiness and majesty of God, is also described by Job:

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
But now mine eye seeth thee.
Wherefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes.—Job xlii. 5, 6.

An effect also remarkably similar is described in reference to the apostle Peter, Luke v. 8: "When Simon Peter saw it [the miracle which Jesus had wrought], he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' ¶ *A people of unclean lips.* A people who are unworthy to celebrate the praises of a God so pure and exalted. ¶ *Mine eyes have seen.* In Ex. xxxiii. 20, it is said: 'Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live;' comp. John i. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 16. Perhaps it was in recollection of this, that Isaiah said he was undone. It is not, however, to be understood that the prophet saw JEHOVAH himself, but only the *symbol* of his presence. It was for this expression, according to the tradition of the Jews, that Manasseh took occasion to put the prophet to death; see Introduction, § 2. ¶ *The Lord of hosts.* JEHOVAH of hosts. John applies this to the Lord Jesus, and this proves that he is Divine; see John xii. 41.

6. *Then flew.* Isaiah is represented as standing *out* of the temple; the seraphim as *in* it. ¶ *Having a live coal.* The Vulgate renders this, 'A stone.' This is, probably, the original meaning of the word; see 1 Kings xix. 6. It at first denoted a hot stone which was used to roast meat upon. It may also mean a coal, from its resemblance to such a stone. ¶ *From off the altar.* The altar of burnt-offering. This stood in the court of the priests, in front of the temple; see Notes on Matt. xxi. 12. The fire on this altar was at first kindled by the Lord, Lev. ix. 24, and was kept continually burning; Lev. vi. 12, 13.

7. *And he laid* it *upon my mouth.* Marg. 'And he caused it to touch my mouth.' This is the more correct rendering. It was a slight, momentary touch, sufficient merely to be a *sign* or *token* that he was cleansed. ¶ *Thine iniquity is taken away.* That is, whatever obstacle there existed to your communicating the message of God to this people, arising from your own consciousness of unworthiness, is taken away. You are commissioned to bear that message, and your own consciousness of guilt should not be a hinderance. To understand this, it should be remembered that *fire*, among the orientals, has been always regarded as an emblem of *purifying*. Thus the Sabeans, the followers of Zoroaster in Persia, worshipped *fire*, as the emblem of a pure divinity; see Mal. iii. 2, 3; comp. Matt. iii. 2. Every minister of the gospel, though conscious of personal unworthiness and unfitness, should yet go freely and cheerfully to his work, if he has evidence that he is called and commissioned by God. ¶ *Is purged.* Is purified, is removed—[illegible] from [illegible] *kâphăr, to cover, to*

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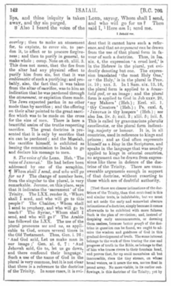

142 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, [1]Here *am* I; send me.

1 Behold me.

overlay; then to make an atonement for, to expiate, to cover sin, to pardon it, to affect or to procure forgiveness; and then to purify in general, to make whole; comp. Note on ch. xliii. 3. This does not mean, that the fire from the altar had any physical effect to purify him from sin, but that it was *emblematic* of such a purifying; and probably, also, the fact that it was taken from the altar of sacrifice, was to him an indication that he was pardoned through the *atonement*, or expiation there made. The Jews expected pardon in no other mode than by sacrifice; and the offering on their altar pointed to the great sacrifice which was to be made on the cross for the sins of men. There is here a beautiful *union* of the truths respecting sacrifice. The great doctrine is presented that it is only by sacrifice that sin can be pardoned; and the Messiah, the sacrifice himself, is exhibited as issuing the commission to Isaiah to go and declare his message to men.

8. *The voice of the* LORD. Heb. 'The voice of JEHOVAH.' He had before been addressed by one of the seraphim. ¶ *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* The change of number here, from the singular to the plural, is very remarkable. Jerome, on this place, says that it indicates the 'sacrament' of the Trinity. The LXX. render it, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?' The Chaldee, 'Whom shall I send to prophesy, and who will go to teach?' The Syriac, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go?' The Arabic has followed the LXX. The use of the plural pronouns *we* and *us*, as applicable to God, occurs several times in the Old Testament. Thus, Gen. i. 26: 'And God said, Let us make man in our image;' Gen. xi. 6, 7: 'And Jehovah said, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language.' Such a use of the name of God in the plural is very common, but it is not clear that there is a reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. In some cases, it is evident that it cannot have such a reference, and that *no argument* can be drawn from the use of that plural form in favour of such a doctrine. Thus, in Isa. xix. 4, the expression 'a cruel lord,' is in the Hebrew in the plural, yet evidently denoting but one. The expression translated 'the most Holy One,' or 'the Holy,' is in the plural in Prov. ix. 10; xxx. 3. In 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16, the plural form is applied to a *household god*, or an image; and the plural form is applied to God in Job xxxv. 10, 'my Makers' (Heb.); Eccl. xii. 1, 'thy Creators' (Heb.); Ps. cxxi. 5, 'JEHOVAH is thy keepers' (Heb.); see also Isa. liv. 5; xxii. 2; xliii. 5; lxii. 5. This is called by grammarians *pluralis excellentiæ*, or the plural form indicating majesty or honour. It is, in all countries, used in reference to kings and princes; and as God often represents himself as a *king* in the Scriptures, and speaks in the language that was usually applied to kings in oriental countries, no argument can be drawn from expressions like these in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. There are unanswerable arguments enough in support of that doctrine, without resorting to those which are of doubtful authority.

[That there are clearer intimations of the doctrines of the Trinity, than that contained in this and similar texts, is indubitable; but we must not set aside the early and somewhat obscure intimations of a doctrine, simply because it comes afterwards to be exhibited with more fulness. Such is the plan of revelation; and, instead of despising early announcements, or deeming them useless, because better *proofs* of the doctrine in question can be found, we ought to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this gradual development of truth. The same interest belongs to the work of thus tracing the rise and progress of truth in the Bible, as belongs to that of him who traces rivers to their fountain head, and proves that, far up amid mountains all but inaccessible, rises the tiny stream, on whose broad waters, as it nears the sea, navies float in proud array. No more visible, in its earlier outflowings, is this doctrine of the Trinity; yet by

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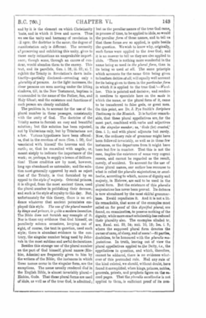

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and by it is the element on which Christianity floats, and in which it lives and moves. Thus we see the unity and harmony of revelation in all ages; the doctrine is the same; the degree of manifestation only is different. The necessity of preserving and exhibiting this unity, gives to these early intimations an unspeakable importance; though some, through an excess of candour, would abandon them to the enemy. This text, and its parallels, Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7, exhibit the Trinity in Revelation's dawn indistinctly—partially disclosed—revealing only a *plurality* of persons. As the light increases, the *three* persons are seen moving under the lifting shadows, till, in the New Testament, baptism is commanded in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the existence and functions of each person are clearly unfolded.

The problem is, to account for the use of the plural number in these passages, consistently with the *unity* of God. The doctrine of the Trinity seems to furnish an easy and beautiful solution; but this solution has been rejected, not by Unitarians only, but by Trinitarians not a few. Various hypotheses have been offered: as, that in the creation of man (Gen. i. 26), God associated with himself the heavens and the earth; or, that he consulted with angels; or, meant simply to indicate the importance of the work; or, perhaps, to supply a lesson of deliberation! These crudities are by most, however, long ago abandoned as untenable; and the solution most generally approved by such as reject that of the Trinity, is that furnished by an appeal to the *style of majesty*. Oriental princes, it is alleged, from the most ancient times, used the plural number in publishing their decrees; and such is the style of royalty to this day. But, unfortunately for this theory, there is no evidence whatever that ancient potentates employed this style. *The use of the plural number by kings and princes, is quite a modern invention.* The Bible does not furnish any example of it. Nor is there any evidence that God himself, on peculiarly solemn occasions, keeping out of sight, of course, the text in question, used such style; there is abundant evidence to the contrary, the singular number being used by Jehovah in the most sublime and awful declarations.

Besides this strange use of the plural number on the part of God himself, plural names (Elohim, Adonim) are frequently given to him by the writers of the Bible; the instances in which these names occur in the singular form, are the exceptions. The name usually rendered *God* in the English Bible, is almost invariably plural—Elohim, Gods. That these plural forms are used of idols, as well as of the true God, is admitted; but as the peculiar names of the true God came, in process of time, to be applied to idols, so would the peculiar *form* of these names, and to tell us that these forms *are* so applied, is quite beside the question. We wish to know why, originally, such forms were applied to the *true* God; and it is no answer to tell us they are also applied to idols. 'There is nothing more wonderful in the name being so used *in the plural form*, than in its being so used *at all*. The same principle which accounts for the name GOD being given to heathen deities *at all*, will equally well account for its being given to them in the *particular form* in which it is applied to the true God.'—*Wardlaw*. This is pointed and decisive; and renders it needless to speculate here on the *mode* in which the name, or the plural form of it, came to be transferred to false gods, or great men. On this point, see Dr. J. Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*. It is further remarkable, that these plural appellatives are, for the most part, combined with verbs and adjectives in *the singular number*; as, '*Gods* (he) *created*,' Gen. i. 1; and with plural adjuncts but rarely. Now, the ordinary rule of grammar might have been followed invariably, as well as in these few instances, or the departures from it might have been but few in number. That this is not the case, implies the existence of some very cogent reason, and cannot be regarded as the result, merely, of accident. To account for the use of these plural names, our author has recourse to what is called the *pluralis majestaticus*, or *excellentiæ*, according to which, nouns of dignity and majesty, in Hebrew, are said to be used in the plural form. But the existence of this *pluralis majestaticus* has never been proved. Its defence is now abandoned by the most skilful grammarians. Ewald repudiates it. And it is not a little remarkable, that some of the examples most relied on for proof of this *dignified plural*, are found, on examination, to possess nothing of the dignity, while more exact scholarship has reduced their plurality also. The examples alluded to, are, Exod. xxi. 29, 34; xxii. 10, 13; Isa. i. 3; where the supposed plural form denotes the owner of *oxen*, of *sheep*, and of *asses*!—fit parties, doubtless, to be honoured with the *pluralis majestaticus*. In truth, leaving out of view the plural appellatives applied to the Deity, *i.e.*, the appellatives in question, and which, therefore, cannot be adduced, there is no evidence whatever of this pretended rule. Had any rule of the kind existed, we should, without doubt, have found it exemplified, when kings, princes, nobles, generals, priests, and prophets figure on the sacred pages. That the *pluralis excellentiæ* is not applied to them, is sufficient proof of its non-

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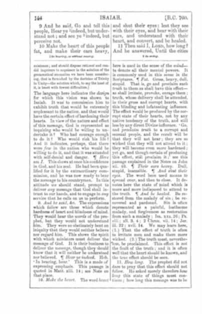

144 ISAIAH. [B.C. 760.

9 And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye [1] indeed, but understand not; and see ye [2] indeed, but perceive not.

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.

11 Then said I, LORD, how long? And he answered, Until the cities

[1] in hearing, or without ceasing.

[2] in seeing.

existence; and should dispose rational and candid inquirers to acquiesce in the solution of the grammatical anomalies we have been considering, that is furnished by the doctrine of Trinity in Unity—the solution which, to say the least of it, is beset with fewest difficulties.]

The language here indicates the *design* for which this vision was shown to Isaiah. It was to commission him to exhibit truth that would be extremely unpleasant to the nation, and that would have the certain effect of hardening their hearts. In view of the nature and effect of this message, God is represented as inquiring who would be willing to undertake it? Who had courage enough to do it? Who would risk his life? And it indicates, perhaps, that there were *few* in the nation who would be willing to do it, and that it was attended with self-denial and danger. ¶ *Here am I.* This shows at once his confidence in God, and his zeal. He had been qualified for it by the extraordinary commission, and he was now ready to bear the message to his countrymen. In this attitude *we* should stand, prompt to deliver *any* message that God shall intrust to our hands, and to engage in *any* service that he calls on us to perform.

9. *And he said, &c.* The expressions which follow are those which denote hardness of heart and blindness of mind. They would hear the *words* of the prophet, but they would not understand him. They were so obstinately bent on iniquity that they would neither believe nor regard him. This shows the spirit with which ministers must deliver the message of God. It is their business to deliver the message, though they should know that it will neither be understood nor believed. ¶ *Hear ye indeed.* Heb. 'In hearing, hear.' This is a mode of expressing emphasis. This passage is quoted in Matt. xiii. 14; see Note on that place.

10. *Make the heart.* The word *heart* here is used in the sense of the *mind*—to denote all their mental powers. It is commonly used in this sense in the Scriptures. ¶ *Fat.* Gross, heavy, dull, stupid. That is, go and proclaim such *truth* to them as shall have this effect—as shall irritate, provoke, enrage them; truth, whose delivery shall be attended, in their gross and corrupt hearts, with this blinding and infatuating influence. The effect would be produced by the corrupt state of their hearts, not by any native tendency of the truth, and still less by any direct Divine influence. 'Go, and *proclaim truth* to a corrupt and sensual people, and the *result* will be that they will not hear; they are so wicked that they will not attend to it; they will become even *more* hardened; yet go, and though certain of producing this effect, still proclaim it;' see this passage explained in the Notes on John xii. 40. ¶ *Their ears heavy.* Dull, stupid, insensible. ¶ *And shut their eyes.* The word here used means *to spread over*, and then to close. It denotes here the state of mind which is more and more indisposed to attend to the truth. ¶ *And be healed.* Be restored from the malady of sin; be recovered and pardoned. Sin is often represented as a painful, loathsome malady, and forgiveness as restoration from such a malady; Isa. xxx. 26; Ps. ciii.; xli. 3, 4; 2 Chron. vii. 14; Jer. iii. 22; xvii. 14. We may learn here, (1.) That the effect of truth is often to irritate men and make them more wicked. (2.) The truth must, nevertheless, be proclaimed. This effect is not the fault of the truth; and it is often well that the heart should be known, and the true effect should be seen.

11. *How long.* The prophet did not dare to pray that this effect should not follow. He asked merely therefore *how long* this state of things must continue; how long this message was to be

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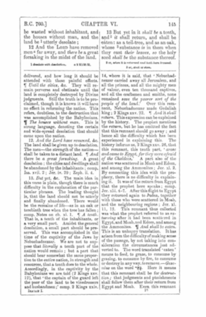

B.C. 760.] CHAPTER VI. 145

be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be [1] utterly desolate;

12 And the LORD have removed men [a] far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13 But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and [2] *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose [3] substance *is* in them when they cast *their leaves*, *so* the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

[1] desolate with desolation.

[a] 2 Ki.25.21.

[2] or, when it is returned and hath been browsed.

[3] or, stock or stem.

delivered, and how long it should be attended with these painful effects. ¶ *Until the cities, &c.* They will remain perverse and obstinate until the land is completely destroyed by Divine judgments. Still the truth is to be proclaimed, though it is known it will have no effect in reforming the nation. This refers, doubtless, to the destruction that was accomplished by the Babylonians. ¶ *The houses without man.* This is strong language, denoting the certain and wide-spread desolation that should come upon the nation.

12. *And the Lord have removed, &c.* The land shall be given up to desolation. The men—the strength of the nation—shall be taken to a distant land. ¶ *And there be a great forsaking.* A great desolation; the cities and dwellings shall be abandoned by the inhabitants; comp. Isa. xvii. 2; Jer. iv. 29; Zeph. ii. 4.

13. *But yet, &c.* The main idea in this verse is plain, though there is much difficulty in the explanation of the particular phrases. The leading thought is, that the land should not be *utterly* and finally abandoned. There would be the remains of life—as in an oak or terebinth tree when the tree has fallen; comp. Notes on ch. xi. 1. ¶ *A tenth.* That is, a tenth of the inhabitants, or a very small part. Amidst the general desolation, a small part should be preserved. This was accomplished in the time of the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar. We are not to suppose that *literally* a tenth part of the nation would remain; but a part that should bear somewhat the same proportion to the entire nation, in strength and resources, that a tenth does to the whole. Accordingly, in the captivity by the Babylonians we are told (2 Kings xxv. 12), that 'the captain of the guard left the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen;' comp. 2 Kings xxiv. 14, where it is said, that 'Nebuchadnezzar carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths, none remained *save the poorer sort of the people of the land*.' Over this remnant, Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah king; 2 Kings xxv. 22. ¶ *And it shall return.* This expression can be explained by the history. The prophet mentions the *return*, but he has omitted the fact that this remnant should go away; and hence all the difficulty which has been experienced in explaining this. The history informs us, 2 Kings xxv. 26, that this remnant, this tenth part, '*arose and came to Egypt, for they were afraid of the Chaldees*.' A part also of the nation was scattered in Moab and Edom, and among the Ammonites; Jer. xl. 2. By connecting this idea with the prophecy, there is no difficulty in explaining it. It was of the return from Egypt that the prophet here speaks; comp. Jer. xliii. 4–7. After this flight to Egypt they returned again to Judea, together with those who were scattered in Moab, and the neighbouring regions; Jer. xl. 11, 12. This remnant thus collected was what the prophet referred to as *returning* after it had been scattered in Egypt, and Moab, and Edom, and among the Ammonites. ¶ *And shall be eaten.* This is an unhappy translation. It has arisen from the difficulty of making sense of the passage, by not taking into consideration the circumstances just adverted to. The word translated 'eaten' means to feed, to graze, to consume by grazing, to consume by fire, to consume or destroy in any way, to remove.—*Gesenius* on the word בָּעַר. Here it means that this remnant shall be for *destruction*; that judgments and punishments shall follow them after their return from Egypt and Moab. Even this remnant

ISAIAH I.

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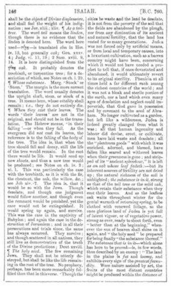

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shall be the object of Divine displeasure, and shall feel the weight of his indignation; see Jer. xliii.; xliv. ¶ *As a teil-tree.* The word *teil* means the *linden*, though there is no evidence that the linden is denoted here. The word here used—אֵלָה—is translated *elm* in Hos. iv. 13, but generally *oak;* Gen. xxxv. 4; Judg. vi. 11, 19; 2 Sam. xviii. 9, 14. It is here distinguished from the אַלּוֹן *oak.* It probably denotes the *terebinth*, or turpentine tree; for a description of which, see Notes on ch. i. 29. ¶ *Whose substance.* Marg. 'Stock' or 'Stem.' The margin is the more correct translation. The word usually denotes the upright shaft, stem, or stock of a tree. It means here, whose *vitality* shall remain; *i.e.*, they do not entirely die. ¶ *When they cast* their leaves. The words 'their leaves' are not in the original, and should not be in the translation. The Hebrew means, 'in their falling'—or when they fall. As the evergreen did *not* cast its leaves, the reference is to the falling of the *body* of the tree. The idea is, that when the tree should fall and decay, still the life of the tree would remain. In the root there would be life. It would send up new *shoots*, and thus a new tree would be produced; see Notes on ch. iv. 2; xi. 1. This was particularly the case with the terebinth, as it is with the fir, the chestnut, the oak, the willow, &c.; see Job xiv. 7. The idea is, that it would be so with the Jews. Though desolate, and though one judgment would follow another, and though even the remnant would be punished, yet the race would not be extinguished. It would spring up again, and survive. This was the case in the captivity of Babylon; and again the case in the destruction of Jerusalem; and in all their persecutions and trials since, the same has always occurred. They survive; and though scattered in all nations, they still live as demonstrative of the truth of the Divine predictions; Deut xxviii. ¶ *The holy seed.* The few remaining Jews. They shall not be utterly destroyed, but shall be like the life remaining in the root of the tree. No prophecy, perhaps, has been more remarkably fulfilled than that in this verse. 'Though the cities be waste and the land be desolate, it is not from the poverty of the soil that the fields are abandoned by the plough, nor from any diminution of its ancient and natural fertility, that the land has rested for so many generations. *Judea* was not forced only by artificial means, or from local and temporary causes, into a luxuriant cultivation, such as a barren country might have been, concerning which it would not have needed a prophet to tell that, if once devastated and abandoned, it would ultimately revert to its original sterility. Phenicia at all times held a far different rank among the richest countries of the world; and it was not a bleak and sterile portion of the earth, nor a land which even many ages of desolation and neglect could impoverish, that God gave in possession and by covenant to the seed of Abraham. No longer cultivated as a garden, but left like a wilderness, Judea is indeed greatly changed from what it was; all that human ingenuity and labour did devise, erect, or cultivate, men have laid waste and desolate; all the "plenteous goods" with which it was enriched, adorned, and blessed, have fallen like seared and withered leaves when their greenness is gone; and stripped of its "ancient splendour," it is left *as an oak whose leaf fadeth:*—but its inherent sources of fertility are not dried up; the natural richness of the soil is unblighted; *the substance is in it*, strong as that of the teil tree or the solid oak, which retain their substance when they cast their leaves. And as the leafless oak waits throughout winter for the genial warmth of returning spring, to be clothed with renewed foliage, so the once glorious land of Judea is yet full of latent vigour, or of vegetative power, strong as ever, ready to shoot forth, even "better than at the beginning," whenever the sun of heaven shall shine on it again, and "the holy seed" be prepared for being finally "the substance thereof." *The substance that is in it*—which alone has here to be proved—is, in few words, thus described by an enemy: "The land in the plains is *fat* and *loamy*, and exhibits every sign of the *greatest fecundity*. Were nature assisted by art, the *fruits* of the most distant countries might be produced within the distance of

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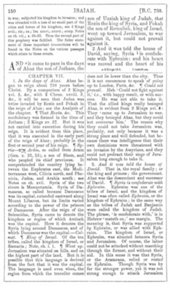

150 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

in war; subjected his kingdom to invasion; and was attended with a loss of no small part of the cities and towns of his kingdom; see 2 Kings xvii; xix; xx.; Isa. xxxvi.; xxxvii.; comp. Notes on ch. viii.; x. 28-32. Thus the second part of this prophecy was fulfilled. The fuller statement of these important transactions will be found in the Notes on the various passages which relate to these events.

AND [a] 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.

2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria [1] is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved and the heart of his

[a] 2 Kings 16.5. [1] resteth on.

CHAPTER VII.

1. *In the days of Ahaz.* Ahaz began to reign about 738 years before Christ. By a comparison of 2 Kings xvi. 5, &c., with 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, &c., it will be seen that Judea was twice invaded by Rezin and Pekah in the reign of Ahaz; see the Analysis of the chapter. ¶ That *Rezin, &c.* This confederacy was formed in the time of Jotham; 2 Kings xv. 37. But it was not carried into execution during his reign. It is evident from this place, that it was executed in the early part of the reign of Ahaz; probably in the first or second year of his reign. ¶ *Syria*—אֲרָם *Arâm*, so called from Aram (Gen. x. 22, 23), a son of Shem, and who peopled its chief provinces. It comprehended the country lying between the Euphrates east, the Mediterranean west, Cilicia north, and Phenicia, Judea, and Arabia south; see Notes on ch. xvii. Syria of the two rivers is Mesopotamia. Syria of Damascus, so called because Damascus was its capital, extended eastward along Mount Libanus, but its limits varied according to the power of the princes of Damascus. After the reign of the Seleucidae, Syria came to denote the kingdom or region of which Antioch was the capital. Here it denotes the Syria lying around Damascus, and of which Damascus was the capital.—*Calmet.* ¶ *King of Israel.* Of the ten tribes, called the kingdom of Israel, or Samaria; Note, ch. i. 1. ¶ *Went up.* Jerusalem was situated on hills, and on the highest part of the land. But it is possible that this language is derived from the fact that it was the capital. The language is used even when, the region from which the traveller comes does not lie lower than the city. Thus it is not uncommon to speak of *going up* to London, Paris, &c. ¶ *Could not prevail.* Heb. 'Could not fight against it,' *i.e.*, with happy result, or with success. He was not able to take it. That the allied kings really besieged Ahaz, is evident from 2 Kings xvi. 5: They 'came up to Jerusalem to war, and they besieged Ahaz, but they could not overcome him.' The reason why they could not take Jerusalem was, probably, not only because it was a strong place and well defended, but because there was intelligence that their own dominions were threatened with an invasion by the Assyrians, and they could not protract their siege of Jerusalem long enough to take it.

2. *And it was told the house of David.* That is, the royal family; or the king and princes; the government. Ahaz was the descendant and successor of David. ¶ *Syria is confederate with Ephraim.* Ephraim was one of the tribes of Israel, and the kingdom of Israel was often called *Ephraim*, or the kingdom of Ephraim; in the same way as the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were called the kingdom of Judah. The phrase, 'is confederate with,' is in Hebrew 'resteth on;' see margin. The meaning is, that Syria was *supported by* Ephraim, or was allied with Ephraim. The kingdom of Israel, or Ephraim, was situated *between* Syria and Jerusalem. Of course, the latter could not be attacked without marching through the former, and without their aid. In this sense it was that Syria, or the Arameans, relied or *rested* on Ephraim. Though Syria was by far the stronger power, yet it was not strong enough to attack Jerusalem

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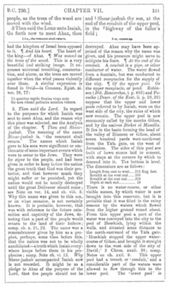

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people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and [1] Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the [2] highway of the fuller's field;

[1] *i.e., the remnant shall return.* [2] or, *causeway.*

had the kingdom of Israel been opposed to it. ¶ *And his heart.* The heart of the king—of Ahaz. ¶ *Was moved as the trees of the wood.* This is a very beautiful and striking image. It expresses universal trembling, consternation, and alarm, as the trees are moved *together* when the wind passes violently over them. A *similar* expression is found in Ovid—in *Canacee,* Epist. xi. ver. 76, 77:

Ut quatitur tepido fraxina virga noto
Sic mea vibrari pallentia membra videres.

3. *Then said the Lord.* In regard to the purposes for which Isaiah was sent to meet Ahaz, and the reason why this place was selected, see the Analysis of the chapter. ¶ *Thou and Shear-jashub.* The meaning of the name *Shear-jashub* is, 'the remnant shall return.' The names which Isaiah gave to his sons were significant or emblematic of some important events which were to occur to the Jews. They were *for signs* to the people, and had been given in order to keep before the nation the great truth that God was their protector, and that however much they might suffer or be punished, yet the nation would not be totally destroyed until the great Deliverer should come; see Note on ver. 14, and ch. viii. 3. Why this name was given to this son, or on what occasion, is not certainly known. It is probable, however, that was with reference to the future calamities and captivity of the Jews, denoting that a part of the people would return to the land of their fathers; comp. ch. x. 21, 22. The name was a remembrancer given by him as a prophet, perhaps, some time before this, that the nation was not to be wholly annihilated—a truth which Isaiah everywhere keeps before them in his prophecies; comp. Note ch. vi. 13. *Why* Shear-jashub accompanied Isaiah now is not recorded. It might be as a pledge to Ahaz of the purpose of the Lord, that the people should not be destroyed. Ahaz may have been apprized of the reason why the name was given, and his presence might serve to mitigate his fears. ¶ *At the end of the conduit.* A *conduit* is a pipe, or other conductor of water. The water flowed from a fountain, but was conducted to different receptacles for the supply of the city. ¶ *Of the upper pool.* Or the upper receptacle, or pond. Robinson (*Bib. Researches*, i. p. 483) and Pococke (*Descr. of the East*, ii. p. 25, 26) suppose that the upper and lower pools referred to by Isaiah, were on the west side of the city, the ruins of which now remain. The upper pool is now commonly called by the monks *Gihon*, and by the natives *Birket el Mamilla.* It lies in the basin forming the head of the valley of Hinnom or Gihon, about seven hundred yards west-northwest from the Yâfa gate, on the west of Jerusalem. The sides of this pool are built of hewn stones laid in cement, with steps at the corners by which to descend into it. The bottom is level. The dimensions are as follows:

Length from east to west......316 Eng. feet.
Breadth at the west end.......200
Breadth at the east end.......218
Depth at each end.............. 18

There is no water-course, or other visible means, by which water is now brought into this reservoir, but it is probable that it was filled in the rainy seasons by the waters which flowed from the higher ground round about. From this upper pool a part of the water was conveyed into the city to the pool of Hezekiah, lying within the walls, and situated some distance to the north-eastward of the Yâfa gate. 'Hezekiah stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David;' 2 Chron. xxxii. 30; comp. Notes on ch. xxii. 9. This upper pool had a trench or 'conduit,' and a considerable part of the waters were allowed to flow through this to the lower pool. The 'lower pool' is

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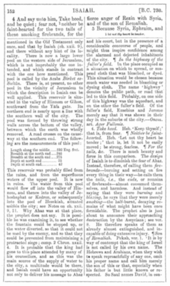

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4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, [1] neither be faint-hearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and

[1] *let not thy heart be tender.*

mentioned in the Old Testament only once, and that by Isaiah (ch. xxii. 9), and there without any hint of its locality. There is now a large lower pool on the western side of Jerusalem, which is not improbably the one intended, and which stands in contrast with the one here mentioned. This pool is called by the Arabs *Birket es-Sultân.* There is, at present, no other pool in the vicinity of Jerusalem to which the description in Isaiah can be well applied. This reservoir is situated in the valley of Hinnom or Gihon, southward from the Yâfa gate. Its northern end is nearly upon a line with the southern wall of the city. The pool was formed by throwing strong walls across the bottom of the valley, between which the earth was wholly removed. A road crosses on the causeway at the southern end. The following are the measurements of this pool:

Length along the middle......592 Eng. feet.
Breadth at the north end.....245
Breadth at the south end.....275
Depth at north end............ 35
Depth at south end............ 42

This reservoir was probably filled from the rains, and from the superfluous waters of the upper pool. It is now in ruins. The water from this pool would flow off into the valley of Hinnom, and thence into the valley of Jehoshaphat or Kedron, or subsequently into the pool of Hezekiah, situated *within* the city; see Notes on ch. xxii. 9, 11. Why Ahaz was at that place, the prophet does not say. It is possible he was examining it, to see whether the fountain could be stopped up, or the water diverted, so that it could not be used by the enemy, and so that they could be prevented from maintaining a protracted siege; comp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 4. It is probable that the king had gone to this place attended by many of his counsellors, and as this was the main source of the supply of water to the city, a multitude would be there, and Isaiah could have an opportunity not only to deliver his message to Ahaz and his court, but in the presence of a considerable concourse of people, and might thus inspire confidence among the alarmed and dejected inhabitants of the city. ¶ *In the highway of the fuller's field.* In the place occupied as a situation on which to spread, or suspend cloth that was bleached, or dyed. This situation would be chosen because much water was needed in bleaching or dyeing cloth. The name 'highway' denotes the public path, or road that led to this field. Probably, on one side of this highway was the aqueduct, and on the other the fuller's field. Of the fuller's field, Eusebius and Jerome merely say that it was shown in their day in the suburbs of the city.—*Onom.* art. *Ager Fullonis.*

4. *Take heed.* Heb. 'Keep thyself;' that is, from fear. ¶ *Neither be faint-hearted.* Heb. 'Let not thy heart be tender;' that is, let it not be easily moved; be strong, fearless. ¶ *For the tails, &c.* There is much beauty and force in this comparison. The *design* of Isaiah is to diminish the fear of Ahaz. Instead, therefore, of calling them *firebrands*—burning and setting on fire every thing in their way—he calls them the *tails, i.e.*, the *ends*, or remains of firebrands—almost consumed themselves, and harmless. And instead of saying that they were *burning* and *blazing*, he says that they were merely *smoking*—the half-burnt, decaying remains of what might have been once formidable. The prophet also is just about to announce their approaching destruction by the Assyrians; see ver. 8. He therefore speaks of them as already almost extinguished, and incapable of doing extensive injury. ¶ *Son of Remaliah.* Pekah, ver. 1. 'It is by way of contempt that the king of Israel is not called by his own name. The Hebrews and Arabians, when they wish to speak reproachfully of any one, omit his proper name and call him merely the son of this or that, especially when his father is but little known or respected. So Saul names David, in con-

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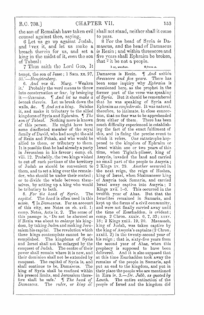

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the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

6 Let us go up against Judah, and [1]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:

7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

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 [2]it be not a people.

[1] or, weaken. [2] from a.

tempt, the son of Jesse; 1 Sam. xx. 27, 31.'—*Hengstenberg*.

6. *And vex it.* Marg. 'Weaken it.' Probably the word means to throw into consternation or fear, by besieging it.—*Gesenius*. ¶ *And let us make a breach therein.* Let us break down the walls, &c. ¶ *And set a king.* Subdue it, and make it tributary to the allied kingdoms of Syria and Ephraim. ¶ *The son of Tabeal.* Nothing more is known of this person. He might have been some disaffected member of the royal family of David, who had sought the aid of Rezin and Pekah, and who would be allied to them, or tributary to them. It is possible that he had already a party in Jerusalem in his favour; comp. ch. viii. 12. Probably, the two kings wished to cut off such portions of the territory of Judah as should be convenient to them, and to set a king over the remainder, who should be under their control; or to divide the whole between themselves, by setting up a king who would be tributary to both.

8. *For the head of Syria.* The *capital*. The *head* is often used in this sense. ¶ *Is Damascus.* For an account of this city, see Notes on ch. xvii. 1; comp. Notes, Acts ix. 2. The sense of this passage is, 'Do not be alarmed as if Rezin was about to *enlarge* his kingdom, by taking Judea and making Jerusalem his capital. The revolution which these kings contemplate cannot be accomplished. The kingdoms of Syria and Israel shall not be enlarged by the conquest of Judah. The centre of their power shall remain where it is now, and their dominion shall not be extended by conquest. The capital of Syria is, and shall continue to be, Damascus. The king of Syria shall be confined within his present limits, and Jerusalem therefore shall be safe.' ¶ *The head of Damascus.* The *ruler*, or *king* of Damascus is Rezin. ¶ *And within threescore and five years.* There has been some inquiry why *Ephraim* is mentioned here, as the prophet in the former part of the verse was speaking *of Syria*. But it should be remembered that he was speaking of Syria and Ephraim as *confederate*. It was natural, therefore, to intimate, in close connection, that no fear was to be apprehended from either of them. There has been much difficulty experienced in establishing the fact of the exact fulfilment of this, and in fixing the precise event to which it refers. *One* catastrophe happened to the kingdom of Ephraim or Israel within one or two years of this time, when Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, invaded the land and carried no small part of the people to Assyria; 2 Kings xv. 29. *Another* occurred in the next reign, the reign of Hoshea, king of Israel, when Shalmaneser king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away captive into Assyria; 2 Kings xvii. 1–6. This occurred in the twelfth year of Ahaz. But that the Israelites remained in Samaria, and kept up the forms of a civil community, and were not finally carried away until the time of Esarhaddon, is evident; comp. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 7, 33; xxxv. 18; 2 Kings xxiii. 19, 20. Manasseh, king of Judah, was taken captive by the king of Assyria's captains (2 Chron. xxxiii. 2) in the twenty-second year of his reign; that is, sixty-five years from the second year of Ahaz, when this prophecy is supposed to have been delivered. And it is also supposed that at this time Esarhaddon took away the remains of the people in Samaria, and put an end to the kingdom, and put in their place the people who are mentioned in Ezra iv. 2.—*Dr. Jubb, as quoted by Lowth*. The entire extinction of the people of Israel and the kingdom did

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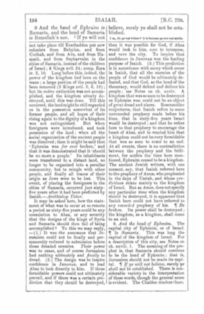

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9 And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. [1]If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

[1] or, Do ye not believe? it is because ye are not stable.

not take place till Esarhaddon put new colonists from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel; 2 Kings xvii. 24; comp. Ezra iv. 2, 10. Long before this, indeed, the power of the kingdom had been on the wane; a large portion of the people had been removed (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, 18); but its *entire* extinction was not accomplished, and the kingdom utterly destroyed, until this was done. Till this occurred, the land might be still regarded as in the possession somewhat of its former people, and all hopes of their rising again to the dignity of a kingdom was not extinguished. But when foreigners were introduced, and took possession of the land; when all the social organization of the ancient people was dissolved; then it might be said that 'Ephraim was *for ever* broken,' and that it was demonstrated that it 'should be no more a people.' Its inhabitants were transferred to a distant land, no longer to be organized into a peculiar community, but to mingle with other people, and finally all traces of their origin as Jews were to be lost. This event, of placing the foreigners in the cities of Samaria, occurred just sixty-five years after it had been predicted by Isaiah.—*Archbishop Usher*.

It may be asked here, how the statement of what was to occur at so remote a period as sixty-five years could be any consolation to Ahaz, or any security that the designs of the kings of Syria and Samaria should *then* fail of being accomplished? To this we may reply,—(1.) It was the assurance that Jerusalem could not be finally and permanently reduced to submission before these dreaded enemies. *Their* power was to cease, and of course Jerusalem had nothing *ultimately* and *finally* to dread. (2.) The design was to inspire confidence in JEHOVAH, and to lead Ahaz to look directly to him. If these formidable powers could not ultimately prevail, and if there was a certain prediction that they should be destroyed, then it was possible for God, if Ahaz would look to him, *now* to interpose, and save the city. To inspire that confidence in JEHOVAH was the leading purpose of Isaiah. (3.) This prediction is in accordance with many which occur in Isaiah, that all the enemies of the people of God would be *ultimately* defeated, and that God, as the head of the theocracy, would defend and deliver his people; see Notes on ch. xxxiv. A kingdom that was so soon to be destroyed as Ephraim was, could not be an object of great dread and alarm. Rosenmüller conjectures, that Isaiah refers to some unrecorded prophecy made before his time, that in sixty-five years Israel would be destroyed; and that he refers here to that prophecy to encourage the heart of Ahaz, and to remind him that a kingdom could not be very formidable that was so soon to come to an end. At all events, there is no contradiction between the prophecy and the fulfilment, for within the time here mentioned, Ephraim ceased to be a kingdom. The ancient Jewish writers, with one consent, say, that Isaiah referred here to the prophecy of Amos, who prophesied in the days of Uzziah, and whose predictions relate mainly to the kingdom of Israel. But as Amos, does not specify any particular *time* when the kingdom should be destroyed, it is apparent that Isaiah here could not have referred to any *recorded* prophecy of his. ¶ *Be broken.* Its power shall be destroyed; the kingdom, as a kingdom, shall come to an end.

9. *And the head of Ephraim.* The capital city of Ephraim, or of Israel. ¶ *Is Samaria.* This was long the capital of the kingdom of Israel. For a description of this city, see Notes on ch. xxviii. 1. The meaning of the prophet is, that Samaria should *continue* to be the head of Ephraim; that is, Jerusalem should not be made its capital. ¶ *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* There is considerable variety in the interpretation of these words, though the general sense is evident. The Chaldee renders them,

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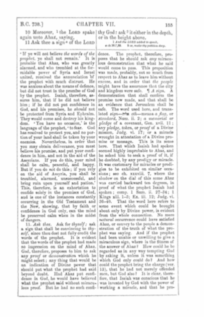

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10 Moreover, [1]the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

11 Ask thee a sign [a] of the LORD thy God: ask [2]it either in the depth, or in the height above.

[1] And the LORD added to speak. [a] ch. 38.7,8. [2] or, make thy petition deep.

'If ye will not believe *the words of the prophet*, ye shall not remain.' It is probable that Ahaz, who was greatly alarmed, and who trembled at the formidable power of Syria and Israel united, received the annunciation of the prophet with much distrust. He was anxious about the means of defence, but did not trust in the promise of God by the prophet. Isaiah, therefore, assures him, that if he did not believe him; if he did not put confidence in God, and his promises, he *should* not be protected from Syria and Ephraim. They would come and destroy his kingdom. 'You have no occasion,' is the language of the prophet, 'to fear. God has resolved to protect you, and no portion of your land shall be taken by your enemies. Nevertheless, in order that you may obtain deliverance, you must believe his promise, and put your confidence in him, and not in the aid of the Assyrians. If you do this, your mind shall be calm, peaceful, and happy. But if you do *not* do this; if you rely on the aid of Assyria, you shall be troubled, alarmed, unsuccessful, and bring ruin upon yourself and nation.' This, therefore, is an exhortation to confide solely in the promises of God, and is one of the instances constantly occurring in the Old Testament and the New, showing, that by faith or confidence in God only, can the mind be preserved calm when in the midst of dangers.

11. *Ask thee.* Ask for *thyself*; ask a sign that shall be convincing to *thyself*, since thou dost not fully credit the words of the prophet. It is evident that the words of the prophet had made no impression on the mind of Ahaz. God, therefore, proposes to him to ask any *proof* or *demonstration* which he might select; any thing that would be an indication of Divine power that should put what the prophet had said beyond doubt. Had Ahaz put confidence in God, he would have believed what the prophet said without miraculous proof. But he had no such confidence. The prophet, therefore, proposes that he should ask *any* miraculous demonstration that what he said would come to pass. This proposition was made, probably, not so much from respect to Ahaz as to leave him without excuse, and in order that *the people* might have the assurance that the city and kingdom were safe. ¶ *A sign.* A demonstration that shall confirm the promise now made, and that shall be an evidence that Jerusalem shall be safe. The word used here, and translated *sign*—אות *oth*—means *a flag*, or *standard*, Num. ii. 2; *a memorial* or *pledge* of a covenant, Gen. xvii. 11; any *pledge*, *token*, or *proof* of a Divine mission, Judg. vi. 17; or a miracle wrought in attestation of a Divine promise or message. This is its sense here. That which Isaiah had spoken seemed highly improbable to Ahaz, and he asked him to seek a proof of it, if he doubted, by any prodigy or miracle. It was customary for miracles or prodigies to be exhibited on similar occasions; see ch. xxxviii. 7, where the shadow on the dial of this same Ahaz was carried backward ten degrees, in proof of what the prophet Isaiah had spoken; comp. 1 Sam. ii. 27–34; 1 Kings xiii. 1–3; Ex. iii. 12; Judg. vi. 36–40. That the word here refers to some event which could be brought about only by Divine power, is evident from the whole connection. No mere *natural* occurrence could have satisfied Ahaz, or convey to the people a demonstration of the truth of what the prophet was saying. And if the prophet had been unable or unwilling to give a miraculous sign, where is the fitness of the answer of Ahaz? How could he be regarded as in any way tempting God by asking it, unless it was something which God only could do? And how could the prophet bring the charge (ver. 13), that he had not merely offended men, but God also? It is clear, therefore, that Isaiah was conscious that he was invested by God with the power of working a miracle, and that he pro-

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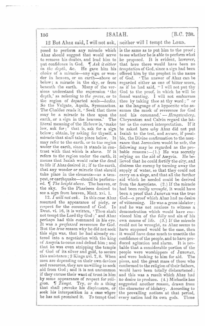

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12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

posed to perform any miracle which Ahaz should suggest that would serve to remove his doubts, and lead him to put confidence in God. ¶ *Ask it either in the depth, &c.* He gave him his *choice* of a miracle—any sign or wonder in heaven, or on earth—above or below; a miracle in the sky, or from beneath the earth. Many of the versions understand the expression 'the depth,' as referring to *the grave*, or to the region of departed souls—*hades*. So the Vulgate, Aquila, Symmachus. The Chaldee reads it, 'Seek that there may be a miracle to thee upon the earth, or a sign in the heavens.' The literal meaning of the Hebrew is, 'make low, ask for;' that is, ask for a sign below; obtain, by asking for thyself, a miracle that shall take place below. It may refer to the earth, or to the region under the earth, since it stands in contrast with that which is above. If it refers to the region under the earth, it means that Isaiah would raise the dead to life if Ahaz desired it; if to the earth, that any wonder or miracle that should take place in the elements—as a tempest, or earthquake—should be performed. ¶ *The height above.* The heaven, or the sky. So the Pharisees desired to see a sign from heaven, Matt. xvi. 1.

12. *I will not ask.* In this case Ahaz assumed the appearance of piety, or respect for the command of God. In Deut. vi. 16, it is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;' and Ahaz perhaps had this command in his eye. It was a *professed* reverence for God. But the *true* reason why he did not seek this sign was, that he had already entered into a negotiation with the king of Assyria to come and defend him; and that he was even stripping the temple of God of its silver and gold, to secure this assistance; 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8. When men are depending on their own devices and resources, they are unwilling to seek aid from God; and it is not uncommon if they excuse their want of trust in him by some appearance of respect for religion. ¶ *Tempt.* Try, or do a thing that shall provoke his displeasure, or seek his interposition in a case where he has not promised it. To tempt God is the same as to put him to the proof; to see whether he is able to perform what he proposed. It is evident, however, that here there would have been no *temptation* of God, since a sign had been offered him by the prophet in the name of God. 'The answer of Ahaz can be regarded either as one of bitter scorn, as if he had said, "I will not put thy God to the proof, in which he will be found wanting. I will not embarrass thee by taking thee at thy word;" or as the language of a hypocrite who assumes the mask of reverence for God and his command.'—*Hengstenberg.* Chrysostom and Calvin regard the latter as the correct interpretation. If it be asked here *why* Ahaz did not put Isaiah to the test, and *secure*, if possible, the Divine confirmation to the assurance that Jerusalem would be safe, the following may be regarded as the probable reasons:—(1.) He was secretly relying on the aid of Assyria. He believed that he could fortify the city, and distress the enemy by turning away the supply of water, so that they could not carry on a siege, and that all the further aid which he needed could be derived from the Assyrians. (2.) If the miracle had been *really wrought*, it would have been a proof that JEHOVAH was the true God—a proof which Ahaz had no desire of witnessing. He was a gross idolater; and he was not anxious to witness a demonstration which would have convinced him of the *folly* and sin of his own course of life. (3.) If the miracle could not be wrought, as Ahaz seems to have supposed would be the case, then it would have done much to unsettle the confidence of the people, and to have produced agitation and alarm. It is probable that a considerable portion of the people were worshippers of JEHOVAH, and were looking to him for aid. The pious, and the great mass of those who conformed to the religion of their fathers, would have been totally disheartened; and this was a result which Ahaz had no desire to produce. (4.) Michaelis has suggested another reason, drawn from the character of idolatry. According to the prevailing notions at that period, every nation had its own gods. Those

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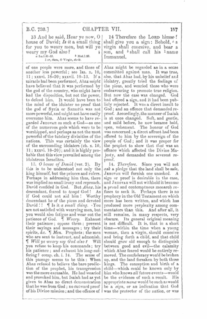

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13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14 Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign: Behold, [a] a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and [b] shall call his [1] name Immanuel.

a Lu.1.31-35. b Mat.1.23.
1 or, thou, O Virgin, shalt.

of one people were more, and those of another less powerful; see Isa. x. 10, 11; xxxvi. 18–20; xxxvii. 10–13. If a miracle had been performed, Ahaz might have believed that it was performed by the god of the country, who might have had the disposition, but not the power, to defend him. It would have been to the mind of the idolater no proof that the god of Syria or Samaria was not more powerful, and might not have easily overcome him. Ahaz seems to have regarded JEHOVAH as such *a* God—as one of the numerous gods which were to be worshipped, and perhaps as not the most powerful of the tutelary divinities of the nations. This was certainly the view of the surrounding idolaters (ch. x. 10, 11; xxxvi. 18–20); and it is highly probable that this view prevailed among the idolatrous Israelites.

13. *O house of David* (ver. 2). By this is to be understood not only the king himself, but the princes and rulers. Perhaps in addressing him thus, there was implied no small irony and reproach. David confided in God. But *Ahaz*, his descendant, feared to *tempt* God! As if God could not aid him! Worthy descendant he of the pious and devoted David!! ¶ *Is it a small thing.* You are not satisfied with wearying men, but you would also fatigue and wear out the patience of God. ¶ *Weary.* Exhaust their patience; oppose them; prevent their sayings and messages; try their spirits, &c. ¶ *Men.* Prophets; the men who are sent to instruct, and admonish. ¶ *Will ye weary my God also?* Will you refuse to keep his commands; try his patience; and exhaust his long-suffering? comp. ch. i. 14. The sense of this passage seems to be this: When Ahaz refused to believe the bare prediction of the prophet, his transgression was the more excusable. He had wearied and provoked him, but Isaiah had as yet given to Ahaz no direct demonstration that he was from God; no outward proof of his Divine mission; and the offence of Ahaz might be regarded as in a sense committed against man. It was true, also, that Ahaz had, by his unbelief and idolatry, greatly tried the feelings of the pious, and wearied those who were endeavouring to promote true religion. But now the case was changed. God had offered a sign, and it had been publicly rejected. It was a direct insult to God; and an offence that demanded reproof. Accordingly, the manner of Isaiah is at once changed. Soft, and gentle, and mild before, he now became bold, open, vehement. The honour of God was concerned; a direct affront had been offered to him by the sovereign of the people of God; and it was proper for the prophet to show that *that* was an offence which affected the Divine Majesty, and demanded the severest reproof.

14. *Therefore.* Since you will not *ask* a pledge that the land shall be safe, JEHOVAH will furnish one unasked. A sign or proof is desirable in the case, and JEHOVAH will not withhold it because a proud and contemptuous monarch refuses to seek it. Perhaps there is no prophecy in the Old Testament on which more has been written, and which has produced more perplexity among commentators than this. And after all, it still remains, in many respects, very obscure. Its general original meaning is not difficult. It is, that in a short time—within the time when a young woman, then a virgin, should conceive and bring forth a child, and that child should grow old enough to distinguish between good and evil—the calamity which Ahaz feared would be entirely removed. The confederacy would be broken up, and the land forsaken by both those kings. The conception and birth of a child—which could be known only by him who knows *all future events*—would be the evidence of such a result. His appropriate *name* would be such as would be a *sign*, or an indication that God was the protector of the nation, or was

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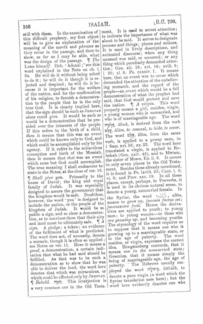

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still with them. In the examination of this difficult prophecy, my first object will be to give an explanation of the meaning of the *words* and *phrases* as they occur in the passage, and then to show, as far as I may be able, what was the design of the passage. ¶ *The* LORD *himself.* Heb. 'Adonai;' see this word explained in the Note on ch. i. 24. He will do it without being asked to do it; he will do it though it is rejected and despised; he will do it because it is important for the welfare of the nation, and for the confirmation of his religion, to furnish a demonstration to the people that he is the only true God. It is clearly implied here, that the sign should be such as JEHOVAH alone could give. It would be such as would be a demonstration that he presided over the interests of the people. If this refers to the birth of a child, *then* it means that this was an event which could be known only to God, and which could be accomplished only by his agency. If it refers to the miraculous conception and birth of the Messiah, then it means that *that* was an event which none but God could accomplish. The true meaning I shall endeavour to state in the Notes, at the close of ver. 16. ¶ *Shall give you.* Primarily to the house of David; the king and royal family of Judah. It was especially designed to assure the government that the kingdom would be safe. Doubtless, however, the word 'you' is designed to include the nation, or the people of the kingdom of Judah. It would be so public a sign, and so clear a demonstration, as to convince *them* that their city and land must be ultimately safe. ¶ *A sign.* A pledge; a token; an evidence of the fulfilment of what is predicted. The word does not, of *necessity*, denote a miracle, though it is often so applied; see Notes on ver. 11. Here it means a *proof*, a demonstration, a certain indication that what he had said should be fulfilled. As that was to be such a demonstration as to show that he was *able* to deliver the land, the word *here* denotes that which was miraculous, or which could be effected *only* by JEHOVAH. ¶ *Behold.* הִנֵּה. This interjection is a very common one in the Old Testament. It is used to arrest attention; to indicate the importance of what was about to be said. It serves to designate persons and things; places and actions. It is used in lively descriptions, and animated discourse; when any thing unusual was said, or occurred; or any thing which peculiarly demanded attention; Gen. xii. 19; xvi. 16; xviii. 9; i. 29; xl. 9; Ps. cxxxiv. 1. It means here, that an event was to occur which demanded the attention of the unbelieving monarch, and the regard of the people—an event which would be a full demonstration of what the prophet had said, that God would protect and save the nation. ¶ *A virgin.* This word properly means a girl, maiden, virgin, a young woman who is unmarried, and who is of marriageable age. The word עַלְמָה, *ălmâ*, is derived from the verb עָלַם, *ālăm*, *to conceal, to hide, to cover.* The word עֶלֶם, *ĕlĕm*, from the same verb, is applied to a *young man*, in 1 Sam. xvii. 56; xx. 22. The word here translated a virgin, is applied to Rebekah (Gen. xxiv. 43), and to Miriam, the sister of Moses, Ex. ii. 8. It occurs in only seven places in the Old Testament. Besides those already mentioned, it is found in Ps. lxviii. 25; Cant. i. 3; vi. 8; and Prov. xxx. 19. In all these places, except, perhaps, in Proverbs, it is used in its obvious natural sense, to denote a young, unmarried female. In the Syriac, the word ܥܠܡ, *ălēm*, means to grow up, *juvenis factus est; juvenescere fecit.* Hence the derivatives are applied to youth; to young men; to young women—to those who *are growing up*, and becoming youths. The etymology of the word requires us to suppose that it means one who is growing up to a marriageable state, or to the age of puberty. The word maiden, or virgin, expresses the correct idea. Hengstenberg contends, that it means one *in the unmarried state;* Gesenius, that it means simply the being of marriageable age, the age of puberty. The Hebrews usually employed the word בְּתוּלָה, *bethûlâ*, to denote a pure virgin (a word which the Syriac translation uses here); but the word here evidently denotes one who

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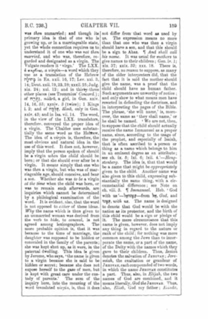

was *then* unmarried; and though its primary idea is that of one who is growing up, or in a marriageable state, yet the whole connection requires us to understand it of one who was *not then married*, and who was, therefore, regarded and designated as a virgin. The Vulgate renders it 'virgo.' The LXX. ἡ παρθένος, *a virgin*—a word which they use as a translation of the Hebrew בְּתוּלָה in Ex. xxii. 16, 17; Lev. xxi. 3, 14; Deut. xxii. 19, 23, 28; xxxii. 25; Judg. xix. 24; xxi. 12; and in thirty-three other places (see Trommius' *Concord.*); of נַעֲרָה, *nâărâ*, a girl, in Gen. xxiv. 14, 16, 55; xxxiv. 3 (twice); 1 Kings i. 2; and of עַלְמָה, *ălmâ*, only in Gen. xxiv. 43; and in Isa. vii. 14. The word, in the view of the LXX. translators, therefore, conveyed the proper idea of a virgin. The Chaldee uses substantially the same word as the Hebrew. The idea of a *virgin* is, therefore, the most obvious and natural idea in the use of this word. It does not, however, imply that the person spoken of should be a virgin *when* the *child* should be born; or that she should ever after be a virgin. It means simply that one who was *then* a virgin, but who was of marriageable age, should conceive, and bear a son. Whether she was *to be* a virgin *at the time* when the child was born, or was to remain such afterwards, are inquiries which cannot be determined by a philological examination of the word. It is evident, also, that the word is not opposed to *either of* these ideas. *Why* the name which is thus given to an unmarried woman was derived from the verb to *hide*, to *conceal*, is not agreed among lexicographers. The more probable opinion is, that it was because to the time of marriage, the daughter was supposed to be hidden or concealed in the family of the parents; she was kept shut up, as it were, in the paternal dwelling. This idea is given by Jerome, who says, 'the name is given to a virgin because she is said to be hidden or secret; because she does not expose herself to the gaze of men, but is kept with great care under the custody of parents.' The sum of the inquiry here, into the meaning of the word translated *virgin*, is, that it does not differ from that word as used by us. The expression means no more than that one who was then a virgin should have a son, and that this should be a sign to Ahaz. ¶ *And shall call his name.* It was usual for *mothers* to give names to their children; Gen. iv. 1; xix. 37; xxix. 32; xxx. 18. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose, as many of the older interpreters did, that the fact that it is said the mother should give the name, was a proof that the child should have no human father. Such arguments are unworthy of notice; and only show to what means men have resorted in defending the doctrines, and in interpreting the pages of the Bible. The phrase, 'she will name,' is, moreover, the same as 'they shall name,' or he shall be named. 'We are not, then, to suppose that the child should actually receive the name Immanuel as a proper name, since, according to the usage of the prophet, and especially of Isaiah, that is often ascribed to a person or thing as a name which belongs to him in an eminent degree as an attribute; see ch. ix. 5; lxi. 6; lxii. 4.'—*Hengstenberg.* The idea is, that that would be a name that might be *appropriately* given to the child. Another name was also given to this child, expressing substantially the same thing, with a circumstantial difference; see Note on ch. viii. 3. ¶ *Immanuel.* Heb. 'God with us'—עִמָּנוּאֵל—from אֵל, *God*, and עִמָּנוּ, *with us.* The name is designed to denote that God would be with the nation as its protector, and the birth of this child would be a sign or pledge of it. The mere circumstance that this name is given, however, does not imply any thing in regard to the nature or rank of the child; for nothing was more common among the Jews than to incorporate the name, or a part of the name, of the Deity with the names which they gave to their children. Thus, *Isaiah* denotes the salvation of JEHOVAH; *Jeremiah*, the exaltation or grandeur of JEHOVAH, each compounded of two words, in which the name JEHOVAH constitutes a part. Thus, also, in *Elijah*, the two names of God are combined, and it means literally, *God the* JEHOVAH. Thus, also, *Eliab*, God my father; *Eliada*,

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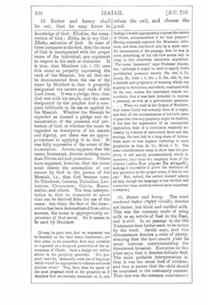

15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

knowledge of God; *Eliakim*, the resurrection of God; *Elihu*, he is my God; *Elisha*, salvation of God. In none of these instances is the fact, that the name of God is incorporated with the proper name of the individual, any argument in respect to his rank or character. It is true, that Matthew (ch. i. 23) uses this name as properly expressing the rank of the Messiah; but all that can be demonstrated from the use of the name by Matthew is, that it *properly* designated the nature and rank of the Lord Jesus. It was a pledge, then, that God was with his people, and the name designated by the prophet had a complete fulfilment in its use as applied to the Messiah. Whether the Messiah be regarded as himself a pledge and demonstration of the presence and protection of God, or whether the name be regarded as descriptive of his nature and dignity, yet there was an *appropriateness* in applying it to him. It was fully expressive of the event of the incarnation. Jerome supposes that the name, Immanuel, denotes nothing more than Divine aid and protection. Others have supposed, however, that the name must denote the assumption of our nature by God in the person of the Messiah, *i.e.*, that God became man. So Theodoret, Irenæus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Chrysostom, Calvin, Rosenmüller, and others. The true interpretation is, that no *argument* to prove that can be derived from the use of the name; but when the fact of the incarnation has been demonstrated from other sources, the *name is appropriately expressive of that event.* So it seems to be used by Matthew.

[It may be quite true, that no argument can be founded on the bare name, Immanuel; yet that name, *in its connection here*, may certainly be regarded as a designed prediction of the incarnation of Christ. Such a design our author allows in the prophecy generally. 'The prophet,' says he, '*designedly* made use of language which would be appropriate to a future and most glorious event.' Why, then, does he speak of the most pregnant word in the prophecy as if Matthew had accidentally stumbled on it, and, finding it would appropriately express the nature of Christ, accommodated it for that purpose? Having originally rejected the Messianic reference, and been convinced only by a more careful examination of the passage, that he was in error, something of his old view seems still to cling to this otherwise admirable exposition. 'The name Immanuel,' says Professor Alexander, 'although it might be used to signify God's providential presence merely (Ps. xlvi. 8, 12; lxxxix. 25; Josh. i. 5; Jer. i. 8; Isa. xliii. 2), has a latitude and pregnancy of meaning which can scarcely be fortuitous; and which, combined with all the rest, makes the conclusion almost unavoidable, that it was here intended to express a personal, as well as a providential presence. . . . When we read in the Gospel of Matthew, that Jesus Christ was actually born of a virgin, and that all the circumstances of his birth came to pass that this very prophecy might be fulfilled, it has less the appearance of an unexpected application, than of a conclusion rendered necessary by a series of antecedent facts and reasonings, the last link in a long chain of intimations more or less explicit (referring to such prophecies as Gen. iii. 15; Micah v. 2). The same considerations seem to show that the prophecy is not merely accommodated, which is, moreover, clear from the emphatic form of the citation (τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ), making it impossible to prove the existence of any quotation in the proper sense, if this be not one.' But, indeed, the author himself admits all this, though his language is less decided and consistent than could be wished on so important a subject.]

15. *Butter and honey.* The word rendered *butter* (חֶמְאָה *khěmâh*), denotes not butter, but thick and curdled milk. This was the common mode of using milk as an article of food in the East, and is still. In no passage in the Old Testament does butter seem to be meant by the word. Jarchi says, that this circumstance denotes a state of plenty, meaning that the land should yield its usual increase notwithstanding the threatened invasion. Eustatius on this place says, that it denotes delicate food. The more probable interpretation is, that it was the usual food of children, and that it means that the child should be nourished in the customary manner. That this was the common nourishment

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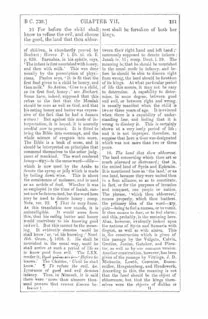

16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

of children, is abundantly proved by Bochart; *Hieroz.* P. i. lib. xi. ch. li. p. 630. Barnabas, in his epistle, says, 'The infant is first nourished with honey, and then with milk.' This was done usually by the prescription of physicians. Paulus says, 'It is fit that the first food given to a child be honey, and then milk.' So Aëtius, 'Give to a child, as its first food, honey;' see *Bochart.* Some have, indeed, supposed that this refers to the fact that the Messiah should be *man* as well as God, and that his eating honey and butter was expressive of the fact that he had a *human nature!* But against this mode of interpretation, it is hoped, it is scarcely needful now to protest. It is fitted to bring the Bible into contempt, and the whole science of exegesis into scorn. The Bible is a book of sense, and it should be interpreted on principles that commend themselves to the sober judgment of mankind. The word rendered *honey*—דְּבַשׁ—is the same word—*dibs*—which is now used by the Arabs to denote the syrup or jelly which is made by boiling down wine. This is about the consistence of molasses, and is used as an article of food. Whether it was so employed in the time of Isaiah, cannot now be determined, but the word here may be used to denote honey; comp. Note, ver. 22. ¶ *That he may know.* As this translation now stands, it is unintelligible. It would *seem* from this, that his eating butter and honey would *contribute* to his knowing good and evil. But this cannot be the meaning. It evidently denotes '*until* he shall know,' or, 'at his knowing;' Nord. *Heb. Gram.*, § 1026. 3. He shall be nourished in the usual way, *until* he shall arrive at such a period of life as to know good from evil. The LXX. render it, Πρὶν ἢ γνῶναι αὐτὸν—'*Before* he knows.' The Chaldee, '*Until* he shall know.' ¶ *To refuse the evil, &c.* Ignorance of good and evil denotes infancy. Thus, in Nineveh, it is said there were 'more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and left hand;' commonly supposed to denote infants; Jonah iv. 11; comp. Deut. i. 39. The meaning is, that he should be nourished in the usual mode in infancy, and before he should be able to discern right from wrong, the land should be forsaken of its kings. At what particular period of life this occurs, it may not be easy to determine. A capability to determine, in some degree, between good and evil, or between right and wrong, is usually manifest when the child is two or three years of age. It is evinced when there is a capability of understanding *law*, and feeling that it is wrong to disobey it. This is certainly shown at a very early period of life; and it is not improper, therefore, to suppose that here a time was designated which was not more than two or three years.

16. *The land that thou abhorrest.* The land concerning which thou art so much *alarmed* or *distressed;* that is, the united land of Syria and Ephraim. It is mentioned here as 'the land,' or as one land, because they were united then in a firm alliance, so as to constitute, in fact, or for the purposes of invasion and conquest, one people or nation. The phrase, 'which thou abhorrest,' means properly, which thou loathest, the primary idea of the word—קוּץ, *qûts*—being to feel a nausea, or to vomit. It then means to fear, or to feel alarm; and this, probably, is the meaning here. Ahaz, however, evidently looked upon the nations of Syria and Samaria with disgust, as well as with alarm. This is the construction which is given of this passage by the Vulgate, Calvin, Grotius, Junius, Gataker, and Piscator, as well as by our common version. Another construction, however, has been given of the passage by Vitringa, J. D. Michaelis, Lowth, Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and Hendewerk. According to this, the meaning is not that the *land* should be the object of abhorrence, but that the kings themselves were the objects of dislike or

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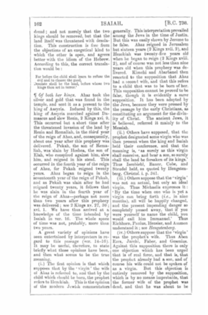

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dread; and not merely that the two kings should be removed, but that the land itself was threatened with desolation. This construction is free from the objections of an exegetical kind to which the other is open, and agrees better with the idiom of the Hebrew. According to this, the correct translation would be:

> For before the child shall learn to refuse the evil and to choose the good,
> Desolate shall be the land, before whose two kings thou art in terror.'

¶ *Of both her kings.* Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the temple, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria. Induced by this, the king of Assyria marched against Damascus and slew Rezin, 2 Kings xvi. 9. This occurred but a short time after the threatened invasion of the land by Rezin and Remaliah, in the *third* year of the reign of Ahaz, and, consequently, about one year after this prophecy was delivered. Pekah, the son of Remaliah, was slain by Hoshea, the son of Elah, who conspired against him, slew him, and reigned in his stead. This occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz, for Pekah reigned twenty years. Ahaz began to reign in the seventeenth year of the reign of Pekah, and as Pekah was slain after he had reigned twenty years, it follows that he was slain in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz—perhaps not more than two years after this prophecy was delivered; see 2 Kings xv. 27, 30; xvi. 1. We have thus arrived at a knowledge of the time intended by Isaiah in ver. 16. The whole space of time was not, probably, more than two years.

A great variety of opinions have been entertained by interpreters in regard to this passage (ver. 14–16). It may be useful, therefore, to state briefly what those opinions have been, and then what seems to be the true meaning.

(i.) The first opinion is that which supposes that by the 'virgin' the wife of Ahaz is referred to, and that by the child which should be born, the prophet refers to Hezekiah. This is the opinion of the modern Jewish commentators generally. This interpretation prevailed among the Jews in the time of Justin. But this was easily shown by Jerome to be false. Ahaz reigned in Jerusalem but sixteen years (2 Kings xvii. 2), and Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign (2 Kings xviii. 2), and of course was not less than nine years old when this prophecy was delivered. Kimchi and Abarbanel then resorted to the supposition that Ahaz had a second wife, and that this refers to a child that was to be born of her. This supposition cannot be *proved* to be false, though it is evidently a *mere* supposition. It has been adopted by the Jews, because they were pressed by the passage by the early Christians, as constituting an argument for the divinity of Christ. The ancient Jews, it is believed, referred it mainly to the Messiah.

(ii.) Others have supposed, that the prophet designated some virgin who was then present when the king and Isaiah held their conference, and that the meaning is, 'as surely as this virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, so surely shall the land be forsaken of its kings.' Thus Isenbiehl, Bauer, Cube, and Steudel held, as quoted by Hengstenberg, *Christol.* i. p. 341.

(iii.) Others suppose that the 'virgin' was not an actual, but only an ideal virgin. Thus Michaelis expresses it: 'By the time when one who is yet a virgin can bring forth (*i.e.*, in nine months), all will be happily changed, and the present impending danger so completely passed away, that if you were yourself to name the child, you would call him Immanuel.' Thus Eichhorn, Paulus, Hensler, and Ammon understand it; see *Hengstenberg*.

(iv.) Others suppose that the 'virgin' was the prophet's wife. Thus Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Faber, and Gesenius. Against this supposition there is only one objection which has been urged that is of real force, and that is, that the prophet already had a son, and of course his wife could not be spoken of as a virgin. But this objection is entirely removed by the supposition, which is by no means improbable, that the former wife of the prophet was dead, and that he was about to be

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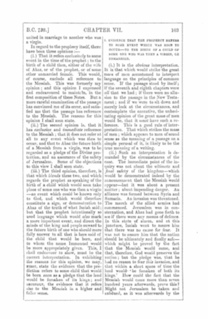

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united in marriage to another who was a virgin.

In regard to the prophecy itself, there have been three opinions:—

(i.) That it refers *exclusively* to some event in the time of the prophet; to the birth of a child then, either of the wife of Ahaz, or of the prophet, or of some other unmarried female. This would, of course, exclude all reference to the Messiah. This was formerly my opinion; and this opinion I expressed and endeavoured to maintain, in the first composition of these Notes. But a more careful examination of the passage has convinced me of its error, and satisfied me that the passage has reference to the Messiah. The reasons for this opinion I shall soon state.

(ii.) The second opinion is, that it has *exclusive* and *immediate* reference to the Messiah; that it does not refer at all to any event which was *then* to occur, and that to Ahaz the future birth of a Messiah from a virgin, was to be regarded as a pledge of the Divine protection, and an assurance of the safety of Jerusalem. Some of the objections to this view I shall soon state.

(iii.) The third opinion, therefore, is that which *blends* these two, and which regards the prophet as speaking of the birth of a child which would soon take place of some one who was then a virgin—an event which could be known only to God, and which would therefore constitute a sign, or demonstration to Ahaz of the truth of what Isaiah said; but that the prophet intentionally so used language which would *also* mark a more important event, and direct the minds of the king and people onward to the future birth of one who should more fully answer to all that is here said of the child that would be born, and to whom the name Immanuel would be more appropriately given. This, I shall endeavour to show, must be the correct interpretation. In exhibiting the reasons for this opinion, we may, FIRST, state the evidence that the prediction refers to some child that would be born *soon* as a pledge that the land would be forsaken of its kings; and SECONDLY, the evidence that it refers also to the Messiah in a higher and fuller sense.

I. EVIDENCE THAT THE PROPHECY REFERS TO SOME EVENT WHICH WAS SOON TO OCCUR—TO THE BIRTH OF A CHILD OF SOME ONE WHO WAS THEN A VIRGIN, OR UNMARRIED.

(i.) It is the *obvious* interpretation. It is that which would strike the great mass of men accustomed to interpret language on the principles of common sense. If the passage stood by itself; if the seventh and eighth chapters were *all* that we had; if there were no allusion to the passage in the New Testament; and if we were to sit down and merely look at the circumstances, and contemplate the narrative, the unhesitating opinion of the great mass of men would be, that it *must* have such a reference. This is a good rule of interpretation. That which strikes the mass of men; which appears to men of sound sense as the meaning of a passage on a simple perusal of it, is likely to be the true meaning of a writing.

(ii.) Such an interpretation is demanded by the circumstances of the case. The immediate point of the inquiry was not about the *ultimate* and *final* safety of the kingdom—which would be demonstrated indeed by the announcement that the Messiah would appear—but it was about a present matter; about impending danger. An alliance was formed between Syria and Samaria. An invasion was threatened. The march of the allied armies had commenced. Jerusalem was in consternation, and Ahaz had gone forth to see if there were any means of defence. In this state of alarm, and at this juncture, Isaiah went to assure him that there was *no* cause for *fear*. It was not to assure him that the nation should be ultimately and finally safe—which might be proved by the fact that the Messiah would come, and that, therefore, God would preserve the nation; but the pledge was, that he had no reason to fear *this* invasion, and that within a short space of time the land would 'be forsaken of both its kings.' How could the fact that the Messiah would come more than seven hundred years afterwards, prove this? Might not Jerusalem be taken and subdued, as it was afterwards by the

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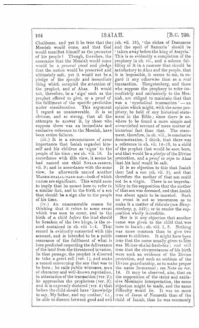

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Chaldeans, and yet it be true that the Messiah would come, and that God would manifest himself as the protector of his people? Though, therefore, the assurance that the Messiah would come would be a *general* proof and pledge that the nation would be preserved and ultimately safe, yet it would not be a pledge of the *specific* and *immediate* thing which occupied the attention of the prophet, and of Ahaz. It would not, therefore, be a 'sign' such as the prophet offered to give, or a proof of the fulfilment of the specific prediction under consideration. This argument I regard as unanswerable. It is so obvious, and so strong, that all the attempts to answer it, by those who suppose there was an immediate and exclusive reference to the Messiah, have been entire failures.

(iii.) It is a circumstance of *some* importance that Isaiah regarded himself and his children as 'signs' to the people of his time; see ch. viii. 18. In accordance with this view, it seems he had named one child SHEAR-JASHUB, vii. 3; and in accordance with the same view, he afterwards named another MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ—both of which names are significant. This would *seem* to imply that he meant here to refer to a similar fact, and to the birth of a son that should be a sign also to the people of his time.

(iv.) An unanswerable reason for thinking that it refers to some event which was soon to occur, and to the birth of a child *before* the land should be forsaken of the two kings, is the record contained in ch. viii. 1–4. That record is evidently connected with this account, and is intended to be a public assurance of the fulfilment of what is here predicted respecting the deliverance of the land from the threatened invasion. In that passage, the prophet is directed to take a great roll (ver. 1), and make a record concerning the son that was to be born; he calls public witnesses, men of character and well-known reputation, in attestation of the transaction (ver. 2); he approaches the prophetess (ver. 3); and it is expressly declared (ver. 4) that before the child should have 'knowledge to say, My father, and my mother,' *i.e.*, be able to discern between good and evil (ch. vii. 16), 'the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria' should be 'taken away before the king of Assyria.' This is so evidently a completion of the prophecy in ch. vii., and a solemn fulfilling of it in a manner that should be satisfactory to Ahaz and the people, that it is impossible, it seems to me, to regard it any otherwise than as a *real* transaction. Hengstenberg, and those who suppose the prophecy to refer *immediately* and *exclusively* to the Messiah, are obliged to maintain that that was a 'symbolical transaction'—an opinion which might, with the same propriety, be held of any historical statement in the Bible; since there is nowhere to be found a more simple and unvarnished account of mere matter of historical fact than that. The statement, therefore, in ch. viii., is conclusive demonstration, I think, that there was a reference in ch. vii. 14–16, to a child of the prophet that would be soon born, and that would be a *pledge* of the Divine protection, and a *proof* or *sign* to Ahaz that his land would be safe.

It is no objection to this that Isaiah then had a son (ch. vii. 3), and that therefore the mother of that son could not be a virgin. There is no improbability in the supposition that the mother of that son was deceased, and that Isaiah was about again to be married. Such an event is not so uncommon as to make it a matter of ridicule (see *Hengstenberg*, p. 342); or to render the supposition wholly incredible.

Nor is it any objection that another name was given to the child that was born to Isaiah; ch. viii. 1, 3. Nothing was more common than to give two names to children. It might have been true that the name usually given to him was Maher-shalal-hash-baz; and still true that the circumstances of his birth were such an evidence of the Divine protection, and such an emblem of the Divine guardianship, as to make proper the name Immanuel; see Note on ver. 14. It may be observed, also, that on the supposition of the strict and exclusive Messianic interpretation, the same objection might be made, and the same difficulty would lie. It was no more true of Jesus of Nazareth than of the child of Isaiah, that he was commonly

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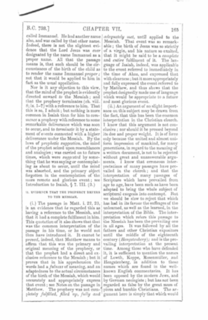

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called Immanuel. *He* had another name also, and was called by that other name. *Indeed*, there is not the slightest evidence that the Lord Jesus was *ever* designated by the name Immanuel as a proper name. All that the passage means is, that such should be the circumstances of the birth of the child as to render the name Immanuel *proper*; not that it would be applied to him in fact as the usual appellation.

Nor is it any objection to this view, that the mind of the prophet is evidently directed onward *to* the Messiah; and that the prophecy terminates (ch. viii. 8; ix. 1–7) with a reference to him. That this is so, I admit; but nothing is more common in Isaiah than for him to *commence* a prophecy with reference to some remarkable deliverance which was soon to occur, and to *terminate* it by a statement of events connected with a higher deliverance under the Messiah. By the laws of *prophetic suggestion*, the mind of the prophet seized upon resemblances and analogies; was carried on to future times, which were *suggested* by something that he was saying or contemplating as about to occur, until the mind was absorbed, and the primary object forgotten in the contemplation of the more remote and glorious event; see Introduction to Isaiah, § 7. III. (3.)

II. EVIDENCE THAT THE PROPHECY REFERS TO THE MESSIAH.

(i.) The passage in Matt. i. 22, 23, is an evidence that *he* regarded this as having a reference to the Messiah, and that it had a complete fulfilment in him. This quotation of it also shows that that was the common interpretation of the passage in his time, or he would not thus have introduced it. It cannot be *proved*, indeed, that Matthew means to affirm that this was the primary and original meaning of the prophecy, or that the prophet had a direct and exclusive reference to the Messiah; but it proves that in his apprehension the words had a *fulness* of meaning, and an adaptedness to the actual circumstances of the birth of the Messiah, which would accurately and appropriately express that event; see Notes on the passage in Matthew. The prophecy was not completely *fulfilled*, *filled up*, *fully* and *adequately met*, until applied to the Messiah. That event was so remarkable; the birth of Jesus was so strictly of a virgin, and his nature so exalted, that it might be said to be a *complete* and *entire* fulfilment of it. The language of Isaiah, indeed, was applicable to the event referred to immediately in the time of Ahaz, and expressed that with clearness; but it more appropriately and fully expressed the event referred to by Matthew, and thus shows that the prophet designedly made use of language which would be appropriate to a future and most glorious event.

(ii.) An argument of no slight importance on this subject may be drawn from the fact, that this has been the common interpretation in the Christian church. I know that this argument is not conclusive; nor should it be pressed beyond its due and proper weight. It is of force only because the united and almost uniform impression of mankind, for many generations, in regard to the meaning of a written document, is not to be rejected without great and unanswerable arguments. I know that erroneous interpretations of many passages have prevailed in the church; and that the interpretation of many passages of Scripture which have prevailed from age to age, have been such as have been adapted to bring the whole subject of scriptural exegesis into contempt. But we should be slow to reject that which has had in its favour the suffrages of the unlearned, as well as the learned, in the interpretation of the Bible. The interpretation which refers this passage to the Messiah has been the prevailing one in all ages. It was followed by all the fathers and other Christian expositors until the middle of the eighteenth century (*Hengstenberg*); and is the prevailing interpretation at the present time. Among those who have defended it, it is sufficient to mention the names of Lowth, Koppe, Rosenmüller, and Hengstenberg, in addition to those names which are found in the well-known English commentaries. It has been opposed by the modern Jews, and by German neologists; but has not been regarded as false by the great mass of pious and humble Christians. The argument here is simply that which would

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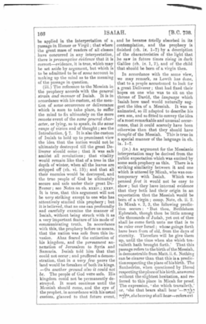

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be applied in the interpretation of a passage in Homer or Virgil; that where the great mass of readers of all classes have concurred in any interpretation, there is *presumptive evidence* that it is correct—evidence, it is true, which may be set aside by argument, but which is to be admitted to be of *some* account in making up the mind as to the meaning of the passage in question.

(iii.) The reference to the Messiah in the prophecy accords with the *general strain and manner* of Isaiah. It is in accordance with his custom, at the mention of some occurrence or deliverance which is soon to take place, to suffer the mind to fix ultimately on the more remote event of the *same general character*, or lying, so to speak, *in the same range of vision* and of thought; see the Introduction, § 7. It is also the custom of Isaiah to hold up to prominent view the idea that the nation would not be ultimately destroyed till the great Deliverer should come; that it was safe amidst all revolutions; that vitality would remain like that of a tree in the depth of winter, when all the leaves are stripped off (ch. vi. 13); and that all their enemies would be destroyed, and the true people of God be ultimately secure and safe under their great Deliverer; see Notes on ch. xxxiv.; xxxv. It is true, that this argument will not be very striking except to one who has attentively studied this prophecy; but it is believed, that no one can profoundly and carefully examine the manner of Isaiah, without being struck with it as a very important feature of his mode of communicating truth. In accordance with this, the prophecy before us means, that the nation was safe from this invasion. Ahaz feared the extinction of his kingdom, and the *permanent* annexation of Jerusalem to Syria and Samaria. Isaiah told him that that could not occur; and proffered a demonstration, that in *a very few years* the land would be forsaken of both its kings. —*On another ground also it could not be*. The people of God were safe. His kingdom could not be permanently destroyed. It must continue until the Messiah should come, and the eye of the prophet, in accordance with his usual custom, glanced to that future event, and he became *totally* absorbed in its contemplation, and the prophecy is finished (ch. ix. 1–7) by a description of the characteristics of the light that he saw in future times rising in dark Galilee (ch. ix. 1, 2), and of the child that should be born of a virgin then.

In accordance with the same view, we may remark, as Lowth has done, that to a people accustomed to look for a great Deliverer; that had fixed their hopes on one who was to sit on the throne of David, the *language* which Isaiah here used would naturally suggest the idea of a Messiah. It was so animated, so ill adapted to describe his own son, and so fitted to convey the idea of a most remarkable and unusual occurrence, that it could scarcely have been otherwise than that they should have *thought* of the Messiah. This is true in a special manner of the language in ch. ix. 1–7.

(iv.) An argument for the Messianic interpretation may be derived from the public expectation which was excited by some such prophecy as this. There is a striking similarity between it and one which is uttered by Micah, who was contemporary with Isaiah. Which was penned *first* it would not be easy to show; but they have internal evidence that they both had their origin in an expectation that the Messiah would be born of a virgin; comp. Note, ch. ii. 2. In Micah v. 2, 3, the following prediction occurs: 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler over Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity. Therefore will he give them up, until the time when she which travaileth hath brought forth.' That this passage refers to the birth of the Messiah, is demonstrable from Matt. ii. 6. Nothing can be clearer than that this is a prediction respecting the place of his birth. The Sanhedrim, when questioned by Herod respecting the place of his birth, answered without the slightest hesitation, and referred to this place in Micah for proof. The expression, 'she which travaileth,' or, 'she that bears shall bear'—יֹלֵדָה יָלָדָה, *she bearing shall bear*—refers evi-

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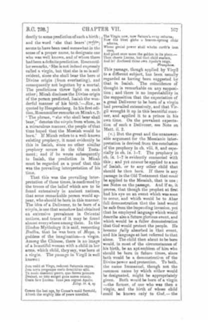

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dently to some prediction of such a birth; and the word 'she that bears' (יֹלֵדָה) seems to have been used somewhat in the sense of a proper name, to designate one who was well known, and of whom there had been a definite prediction. Rosenmüller remarks, 'She is not indeed expressly called a virgin, but that she is so is self-evident, since she shall bear the hero of Divine origin (from everlasting), and consequently not begotten by a mortal. The predictions throw light on each other; Micah discloses the Divine origin of the person predicted, Isaiah the wonderful manner of his birth.'—*Ros.*, as quoted by Hengstenberg. In his first edition, Rosenmüller remarks on Micah v. 2: 'The phrase, "she who shall bear shall bear," denotes the *virgin* from whom, in a miraculous manner, the people of that time hoped that the Messiah would be born.' If Micah refers to a well-known existing prophecy, it must evidently be this in Isaiah, since no other similar prophecy occurs in the Old Testament; and if he wrote subsequently to Isaiah, the prediction in Micah must be regarded as a proof that this was the prevailing interpretation of his time.

That this was the prevailing interpretation of those times, is confirmed by the traces of the belief which are to be found extensively in ancient nations, that some remarkable person would appear, who should be born in this manner. The idea of a Deliverer, to be born of a *virgin*, is one that somehow had obtained an extensive prevalence in Oriental nations, and traces of it may be found almost everywhere among them. In the Hindoo Mythology it is said, respecting *Budhu*, that he was born of *Maya*, a goddess of the imagination—a virgin. Among the Chinese, there is an image of a beautiful woman with a child in her arms, which child, they say, was born of a virgin. The passage in Virgil is well known:

Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna:
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
Casta fave Lucina: tuus jam regnat Apollo.
Eclog. iv. 6, *sq.*

Comes the last age, by Cumæ's maid foretold;
Afresh the mighty line of years unrolled.
The Virgin now, now Saturn's sway returns;
Now the blest globe a heaven-sprung child adorns,
Whose genial power shall whelm earth's iron race,
And plant once more the golden in its place.—
Thou chaste Lucina, but that child sustain,
And lo! disclosed thine own Apollo's reign.
Wrangham.

This passage, though applied by Virgil to a different subject, has been usually regarded as having been suggested by that in Isaiah. The coincidence of thought is remarkable on any supposition; and there is no improbability in the supposition that the expectation of a great Deliverer to be born of a virgin had prevailed extensively, and that Virgil wrought it up in this beautiful manner, and applied it to a prince in his own time. On the prevalent expectation of such a Deliverer, see Note on Matt. ii. 2.

(v.) But the great and the unanswerable argument for the Messianic interpretation is derived from the conclusion of the prophecy in ch. viii. 8, and especially in ch. ix. 1–7. The prophecy in ch. ix. 1–7 is evidently connected with this; and yet *cannot* be applied to a son of Isaiah, or to any other child that should be then born. If there is any passage in the Old Testament that *must* be applied to the Messiah, that is one; see Notes on the passage. And if so, it proves, that though the prophet at first had his eye on an event which was soon to occur, and which would be to Ahaz full demonstration that the land would be safe from the impending invasion, yet that he employed language which would describe also a future glorious event, and which would be a fuller demonstration that God would protect the people. *He* became *fully* absorbed in that event, and his language at last referred to that alone. The child then about to be born would, in most of the circumstances of his birth, be an apt emblem of him who should be born in future times, since both would be a demonstration of the Divine power and protection. To both, the name Immanuel, though not the common name by which either would be designated, might be appropriately given. Both would be born of a virgin —the former, of one who was then a virgin, and the birth of whose child could be known only to God,—the

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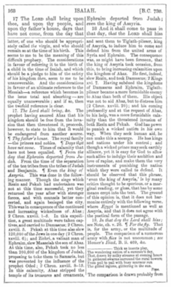

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17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Assyria.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the LORD shall hiss

latter, of one who should be appropriately called *the* virgin, and who should remain so at the time of his birth. This seems to me to be the meaning of this difficult prophecy. The considerations in favour of referring it to the birth of a child in the time of Isaiah, and which should be a pledge to him of the safety of his kingdom *then*, seem to me to be unanswerable. And the considerations in favour of an ultimate reference to the Messiah—a reference which becomes in the issue total and absorbing—are equally unanswerable; and if so, then the twofold reference is clear.

17. *The Lord shall bring*, &c. The prophet having assured Ahaz that his kingdom should be free from the invasion that then threatened it, proceeds, however, to state to him that it would be endangered *from* another source. ¶ *Thy father's house.* The royal family—the princes and nobles. ¶ *Days that have not come.* Times of calamity that have not been equalled. ¶ *From the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.* From the time of the separation of the ten tribes from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. ¶ Even *the king of Assyria.* This was done in the following manner. Though the siege which Rezin and Pekah had undertaken was not at this time successful, yet they returned the year after with stronger forces, and with counsels better concerted, and again besieged the city. This was in consequence of the continued and increasing wickedness of Ahaz; 2 Chron. xxviii. 1–5. In this expedition, a great multitude were taken captives, and carried to Damascus; 2 Chron. xxviii. 5. Pekah at this time also slew 120,000 of the Jews in one day (2 Chron. xxviii. 6); and Zichri, a valiant man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the son of Ahaz. At this time, also, Pekah took no less than 200,000 of the kingdom of Judah, proposing to take them to Samaria, but was prevented by the influence of the prophet Oded; 2 Chron. xxviii. 8–15. In this calamity, Ahaz stripped the temple of its treasures and ornaments, and sent them to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to induce him to come and defend him from the united arms of Syria and Ephraim. The consequence was, as might have been foreseen, that the king of Assyria took occasion, from this, to bring increasing calamities upon the kingdom of Ahaz. He first, indeed, slew Rezin, and took Damascus; 2 Kings xvi. 7. Having subdued the kingdoms of Damascus and Ephraim, Tiglath-pileser became a more formidable enemy to Ahaz than both of them. His object was not to aid Ahaz, but to distress him (2 Chron. xxviii. 20); and his coming professedly and at the request of Ahaz, to his help, was a more formidable calamity than the threatened invasion of both Rezin and Pekah. God has power to punish a wicked nation in his own way. When they seek human aid, he can make this a scourge. He has kings and nations under his control; and though a wicked prince may seek earthly alliance, yet it is easy for God to allow such allies to indulge their ambition and love of rapine, and make them the very instruments of punishing the nation which they were called to defend. It should be observed that this phrase, 'even the king of Assyria,' is by many critics thought to be spurious, or a marginal reading, or gloss, that has by some means crept into the text. The ground of this opinion is, that it does not harmonize entirely with the following verse, where *Egypt* is mentioned as well as Assyria, and that it does not agree with the poetical form of the passage.

18. *In that day the Lord shall hiss*; see Note, ch. v. 26. ¶ *For the fly.* That is, for the army, or the multitude of people. The comparison of a numerous army with *flies* is not uncommon; *see* Homer's *Iliad*, B. ii. 469, &c.

——— Thick as insects play,
The wandering nation of a summer's day,
That, drawn by milky streams at evening hours
In gathered swarms surround the rural bowers;
From pail to pail with busy murmur run
The gilded legions, glittering in the sun.
Pope.

The comparison is drawn probably from

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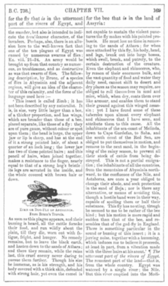

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for the fly that *is* in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria:

the *number*, but also is intended to indicate the *troublesome* character, of the invaders. Perhaps, also, there is an allusion here to the well-known fact that one of the ten plagues of Egypt was caused by numerous swarms of flies; Ex. viii. 21–24. An army would be brought up from that country as numerous, as troublesome, and as destructive as was that swarm of flies. The following description, by Bruce, of a species of flies in Abyssinia and the adjacent regions, will give an idea of the character of this calamity, and the force of the language used here:—

'This insect is called Zimb; it has not been described by any naturalist. It is, in size, very little larger than a bee, of a thicker proportion, and has wings, which are broader than those of a bee, placed separate, like those of a fly: they are of pure gauze, without colour or spot upon them; the head is large, the upper jaw or lip is sharp, and has at the end of it a strong pointed hair, of about a quarter of an inch long; the lower jaw has two of these pointed hairs; and this pencil of hairs, when joined together, makes a resistance to the finger, nearly equal to that of a strong hog's bristle; its legs are serrated in the inside, and the whole covered with brown hair or down.

ZIMB OR DOG-FLY OF ABYSSINIA.
From Bruce's Travels.

As soon as this plague appears, and their buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain, till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger. No remedy remains, but to leave the black earth, and hasten down to the sands of Atbara; and there they remain, while the rains last, this cruel enemy never daring to pursue them further. Though his size be immense, as is his strength, and his body covered with a thick skin, defended with strong hair, yet even the camel is not capable to sustain the violent punctures the fly makes with his pointed proboscis. He must lose no time in removing to the sands of Atbara; for when once attacked by this fly, his body, head, and legs, break out into large bosses, which swell, break, and putrefy, to the certain destruction of the creature. Even the elephant and rhinoceros, who, by reason of their enormous bulk, and the vast quantity of food and water they daily need, cannot shift to desert and dry places as the season may require, are obliged to roll themselves in mud and mire, which, when dry, coats them over like armour, and enables them to stand their ground against this winged assassin; yet I have found some of these tubercles upon almost every elephant and rhinoceros that I have seen, and attribute them to this cause. All the inhabitants of the sea-coast of Melinda, down to Cape Gardefan, to Saba, and the south coast of the Red Sea, are obliged to put themselves in motion, and remove to the next sand, in the beginning of the rainy season, to prevent all their stock of cattle from being destroyed. This is not a partial emigration; the inhabitants of all the countries, from the mountains of Abyssinia northward, to the confluence of the Nile, and Astaborus, are once a year obliged to change their abode, and seek protection in the sand of Beja; nor is there any alternative, or means of avoiding this, though a hostile band were in their way, capable of spoiling them or half their substance. This fly has no sting, though he seemed to me to be rather of the bee kind; but his motion is more rapid and sudden than that of the bee, and resembles that of the gad-fly in England. There is something particular in the sound or buzzing of this insect; it is a jarring noise, together with a humming, which induces me to believe it proceeds, at least in part, from a vibration made with the three hairs at his snout.' ¶ *The uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt.* The remotest part of the land—that is, from the whole country. Egypt was watered by a single river; the Nile. But this river emptied into the Mediterranean by several mouths; and from this river also were cut numerous canals to water the land. These are intended by the *rivers* of Egypt; see Notes, ch. xix. 6, 7. Those *canals* would be stagnant for no small part of the year; and around them would be produced, as is usual near stagnant waters, great quantities of flies. This prophecy was fulfilled by the invasion of the land in subsequent times by the Egyptians; 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, 24; xxxvi. 1, 2. ¶ *And for the bee.* That is, for the *army*. An *army* is compared to *bees* on account of their number; perhaps also on account of the pungency and severity of the sting. The comparison is common; see Deut. i. 44; vii. 20; Ps. cxviii. 12. The Chaldee has rendered this verse, 'The Lord shall call to a people girded with the armies of the brave, who are numerous as flies, and shall bring them from the ends of the land of Egypt; and strong armies, strong as bees, and shall bring them from the land of Assyria.' No prophecy was ever more completely fulfilled than this by the successive invasions of Pharaoh-Necho, Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar; see Isa. xxxvi.; xxxvii.; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7–21.

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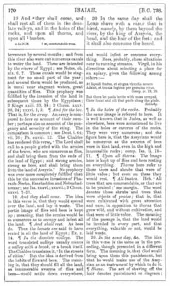

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19 And *a* they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all [1] bushes.

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.

a Je.16.16. [1] or, *commendable trees.*

19. *And they shall come.* The idea in this verse is, that they would spread over the land, and lay it waste. The poetic image of flies and bees is kept up; meaning, that the armies would be so numerous as to occupy and infest all the land. ¶ *And shall rest.* As bees do. Thus the *locusts are* said to have *rested* in all the land of Egypt; Ex. x. 14. ¶ *In the desolate valleys.* The word translated *valleys* usually means *a valley with a brook*, or a brook itself. The Chaldee translates it, 'In the streets of cities.' But the idea is derived from the habits of flies and bees. The meaning is, that they should fill all the land, as innumerable swarms of flies and bees—would settle down everywhere, and would infest or consume everything. Bees, probably, chose situations near to running streams. Virgil, in his directions about selecting a place for an apiary, gives the following among others:—

At liquidi fontes, et stagna virentia musco
Adsint, et tenuis fugiens per gramina rivus.
Georg. iv. 18, 19.

But there let pools invite with moss arrayed,
Clear fount and rill that purls along the glade.
Sotheby.

¶ *In the holes of the rocks.* Probably the same image is referred to here. It is well known that in Judea, as well as elsewhere, bees were accustomed to live in the holes or caverns of the rocks. They were very numerous; and the figure here is, that the Assyrians would be numerous as the swarms of bees were in that land, even in the high and inaccessible rocks; comp. Isa. ii. 19–21. ¶ *Upon all thorns.* The image here is kept up of flies and bees resting on everything. *Thorns* here refer to those trees and shrubs that were of little value; but even on these they would rest. ¶ *All bushes.* Heb. 'All trees that are commendable, or that are to be praised;' see margin. The word denotes those shrubs and trees that were objects of *praise*; that is, that were cultivated with great attention and care, in opposition to *thorns* that grew wild, and without cultivation, and that were of little value. The meaning of the passage is, that the land would be invaded in every part, and that everything, valuable or not, would be laid waste.

20. *In the same day*, &c. The idea in this verse is the same as in the preceding, though presented in a different form. The meaning is, that *God* would bring upon them this punishment, but that he would make use of the Assyrian as an *instrument* by which to do it. ¶ *Shave.* The act of shaving off the hair denotes punishment or disgrace;

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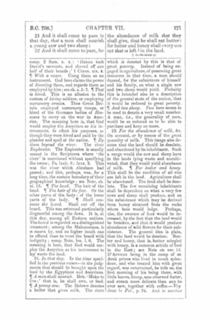

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep:

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 [1] in the land.

[1] *In the midst of.*

comp. 2 Sam. x. 4.: 'Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off *one* half of their beards;' 1 Chron. xix. 4. ¶ *With a razor.* Using them as an instrument. God here claims the power of directing them, and regards them as employed by him; see ch. x. 5-7. ¶ *That is hired.* This is an allusion to the custom of *hiring* soldiers, or employing *mercenary armies.* Thus Great Britain employed *mercenary* troops, or hired of the Germans bodies of *Hessians* to carry on the war in America. The meaning here is, that God would employ the Assyrians as *his* instruments, to effect *his* purposes, as though they were *hired* and paid by the plunder and spoil of the nation. ¶ *By them beyond the river.* The river *Euphrates.* The Euphrates is usually meant in the Scriptures where 'the river' is mentioned without specifying the name; Ps. lxxii. 8; lxxx. 2. This was the river which Abraham had passed; and this, perhaps, was, for a long time, the eastern boundary of their geographical knowledge; see Note, ch. xi. 15. ¶ *The head.* The hair of the head. ¶ *The hair of the feet.* Or the other parts of the body; of the lower parts of the body. ¶ *Shall consume the beard.* Shall cut off the beard. This was esteemed particularly disgraceful among the Jews. It is, at this day, among all Eastern nations. The *beard* is regarded as a distinguished ornament; among the Mahometans, it is *sworn* by, and no higher insult can be offered than to treat the beard with indignity; comp. Note, Isa. l. 6. The meaning is here, that God would employ the Assyrian as his instrument to lay waste the land.

21. *In that day.* In the time specified in the previous verses—in the judgments that should be brought upon the land by the Egyptians and Assyrians. ¶ *A man shall nourish.* Heb. 'Make to live;' that is, he shall own, or feed. ¶ *A young cow.* The Hebrew denotes a heifer that gives milk. The state which is denoted by this is that of great *poverty.* Instead of being engaged in agriculture, of possessing great resources in that time, a man should depend, for the subsistence of himself and his family, on what a single cow and two sheep would yield. Probably this is intended also as a description of the general state of the nation, that it would be reduced to great poverty. ¶ *And two sheep.* Two here seems to be used to denote a very small number. A man, *i.e.*, the generality of men, would be so reduced as to be able to purchase and keep no more.

22. *For the abundance of milk, &c.* On account, or by means of the great quantity of milk. This image also denotes that the land should be desolate, and abandoned by its inhabitants. Such a range would the cow and sheep have in the lands lying waste and uncultivated, that they would yield abundance of milk. ¶ *For butter and honey.* This shall be the condition of all who are left in the land. Agriculture shall be abandoned. The land shall be desolate. The few remaining inhabitants shall be dependent on what a very few cows and sheep shall produce, and on the subsistence which may be derived from honey obtained from the rocks where bees would lodge. Perhaps, also, the swarms of *bees* would be increased, by the fact that the land would be forsaken, and that it would produce abundance of wild flowers for their subsistence. The general idea is plain, that the land would be desolate. Butter and honey, that is, butter mingled with honey, is a common article of food in the East; see Note on ver. 15. D'Arvieux being in the camp of an Arab prince who lived in much splendour, and who treated him with great regard, was entertained, he tells us, the first morning of his being there, with little loaves, *honey, new-churned butter,* and cream more delicate than any he ever saw, together with coffee.—*Voy dans la Pal.*, p. 24. And in another

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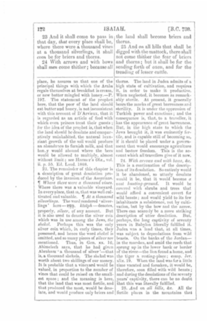

23 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall *even* be for briers and thorns.

24 With arrows and with bows shall *men* come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

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.

place, he assures us that one of the principal things with which the Arabs regale themselves at breakfast is cream, or new butter mingled with honey.—P. 197. The statement of the prophet here, that the poor of the land should eat butter and honey, is not inconsistent with this account of D'Arvieux, that it is regarded as an article of food with which even princes treat their guests; for the idea of the prophet is, that when the land should be desolate and comparatively uninhabited, the natural luxuriant growth of the soil would produce an abundance to furnish milk, and that honey would abound where the bees would be allowed to multiply, almost without limit; see Harmer's *Obs.*, vol. ii. p. 55. Ed. Lond. 1808.

23. The remainder of this chapter is a description of great desolation produced by the invasion of the Assyrians. ¶ *Where there were a thousand vines.* Where there was a valuable vineyard. In every place, that is, that was well cultivated and valuable. ¶ *At a thousand silverlings.* The word rendered 'silverlings' here—כֶּסֶף, *kĕsĕph*—denotes, properly, *silver,* of any amount. But it is also used to denote the silver coin which was in use among the *Jews, the shekel.* Perhaps this was the only silver coin which, in early times, they possessed, and hence the word *shekel* is omitted, and so many pieces of *silver* are mentioned. Thus, in Gen. xx. 16, Abimelech says, that he had given Abraham 'a thousand of silver'—that is, a thousand shekels. The shekel was worth about two shillings of our money. It is probable that a vineyard would be valued, in proportion to the number of vines that could be raised on the smallest space; and the meaning is here, that the land that was most fertile, and that produced the most, would be desolate, and would produce only briers and thorns. The land in Judea admits of a high state of cultivation, and requires it, in order to make it productive. When neglected, it becomes as remarkably sterile. At present, it generally bears the marks of great barrenness and sterility. It is under the oppression of Turkish power and exactions; and the consequence is, that, to a traveller, it has the appearance of great barrenness. But, in the high state to which the Jews brought it, it was eminently fertile, and is capable still of becoming so, if it should be placed under a government that would encourage agriculture and bestow freedom. This is the account which all travellers give of it now.

24. *With arrows and with bows, &c.* This is a continuation of the description of its desolation. So entirely would it be abandoned, so utterly desolate would it be, that it would become *a vast hunting-ground.* It would be covered with shrubs and trees that would afford a convenient covert for wild beasts; and would yield to its few inhabitants a subsistence, not by cultivation, but by the bow and the arrow. There can scarcely be a more striking description of utter desolation. But, perhaps, the long captivity of seventy years in Babylon literally fulfilled it. Judea was a land that, at all times, was subject to depredations from wild beasts. On the banks of the Jordan—in the marshes, and amid the reeds that sprung up in the lower bank or border of the river—the lion found a home, and the tiger a resting-place; comp. Jer. xlix. 19. When the land was for a little time vacated and forsaken, it would be, therefore, soon filled with wild beasts; and during the desolations of the seventy years' captivity, there can be no doubt that this was literally fulfilled.

25. *And on all hills, &c.* All the fertile places in the mountains that

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CHAPTER VIII.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

In ch. vii. the prophet had told Ahaz that God would give him a sign that the land of Judah should be safe from the threatened invasion of the united armies of Syria and Israel. In this chapter, there is a record of the primary fulfilment of that promise, ver. 1-4. From ver. 5 to ver. 8, the prophet resumes and repeats what he had said before in ch. vii. 17-25, that although the land should be safe from this invasion, yet one more formidable would occur by the armies of Assyria. The cause of this is stated to be, that Judah had despised the Lord, and had sought alliances with Syria and Israel. The prophet then proceeds to exhort the people to put confidence in Jehovah—assuring them that if they refused to confide in him, they must expect to be destroyed, ver. 9-18; and the chapter concludes with denouncing punishment on those that looked to necromancers and diviners, rather than to the true God. The prophecy is intimately connected with that in the previous chapter; and was delivered, evidently, not far from the same time.

MOREOVER the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning [1] Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

[1] In making speed to the spoil, he hasteneth the prey, or, make speed, &c.

used to be cultivated with the spade. Vineyards were often planted on the sides of hills; and those places were among the most productive and fertile in the land; see ch. v. 1. ¶ *The mattock.* The spade; the garden hoe; or the weeding-hook. An instrument chiefly used, probably, in vineyards. ¶ *There shall not come thither.* There shall not be. ¶ *The fear of briers and thorns.* This does not make sense; or if it does, it is not a sense consistent with the connection. The idea of the whole passage is, that the land, even the most fertile parts of it, should be given up to briers and thorns; that is, to desolation. The Hebrew here, is ambiguous. It may mean, '*thou* shalt not come there, for fear of the briers and thorns.' That is, the place that was formerly so fertile, that was cultivated with the spade, shall now be so completely covered with thorns, and shall furnish so convenient a resting-place for wild beasts and reptiles, as to deter a man from going there. The LXX., and the Syriac, however, understand it differently—as denoting that those places should be still cultivated. But this is evidently a departure from the sense of the connection. Lowth understands it in the *past* tense; 'where the fear of briers and thorns never came.' The general idea of the passage is plain, that those places, once so highly cultivated, would now be desolate. ¶ *Shall be for the sending forth,* &c. Shall be wild, uncultivated, and desolate—vast *commons* on which oxen and sheep shall feed at large. ¶ *Lesser cattle.* Heb. 'Sheep, or the flock.' Sheep were accustomed to range in deserts and uncultivated places, and to obtain there, under the guidance of the shepherd, their subsistence. The description, therefore, in these verses, is one of extensive and wide desolation; and one that was accomplished in the calamities that came upon the land in the invasions by the Egyptians and Assyrians.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. *Take thee a great roll.* The word which is here translated 'roll' more properly signifies *tablet.* So the Chaldee renders it. Those *tablets* were made of wood, metal, or stone, for the purpose of writing on; see ch. xxx. 8; Hab. ii. 2. On these tablets, or smooth plates, writing was performed by cutting the letters with an iron *stylus,* or small chisel. The process was slow, but the writing was permanent. They sometimes used the skins of animals, or the bark of trees, and subsequently the *papyrus* of Egypt (comp. Note, ch. xix. 7); and it is possible that Isaiah may have used such a roll or volume on this occasion; comp. ver. 16. ¶ *With a man's pen.* The word *pen* here (חֶרֶט) denotes the iron *stylus,* which was used to *engrave* or *cut* the letters in the metal or wood. The phrase 'a man's pen,' has been variously interpreted. The Chaldee renders it, 'Write in it an open, or clear writing, or an expanded writing;' meaning that he should make it clear and distinct, so as to be easily read. The Syriac, 'Write on it in the [usual] custom of men.' The word which is translated 'man's' (אֱנוֹשׁ)

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2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah [a] the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3 And I [1] went unto the prophetess; and she conceived and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz:

4 For [b] before the child shall have

a 2 Ki.16.10. 1 approached. b ch.7.16.

usually denotes common men, the lower ranks, in opposition to the higher ranks of society. And probably the direction means simply, 'write on it in letters such as men commonly use; in a plain, open, distinct manner—without using any mysterious emblems or characters, but so that men may read it distinctly and easily.' A parallel place occurs in Hab. ii. 2: 'Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.' ¶ *Concerning.* Heb. לְ. This preposition may denote *concerning, of,* or *to.* I understand it here as referring to the *heading* or *title* of the prophecy. This was to be set *over* the prophecy, as a running title, to denote the main subject of it. The subject is indicated in the name which is immediately added. ¶ *Maher.* Hasten; or, he shall hasten. ¶ *Shalal.* Spoil, or prey. ¶ *Hash.* Hasten, or make speed. ¶ *Baz.* Spoil, or prey. The name used here is a repetition of the same idea—denoting haste in seizing prey, or spoil; and is repeated to give emphasis, and to excite attention. The idea is, that the Assyrian would hasten to his plunder—that it would be accomplished with speed. This name was to be given to a child of Isaiah; and this child was to be a *sign* of the event which was signified by the name; see ver. 18; comp. Hab. ii. 2, 3.

2. *And I took unto me faithful witnesses.* What was the precise object in calling in these witnesses is not known. Some have supposed that it was to bear testimony to the marriage of the prophet at that time. But it may have been for the purpose of a public record of the prophecy; a record so made, that *the precise time* when it was delivered could be attested without dispute. The prophecy was an important one; and it was important to know, in the most authentic and undisputed manner, that such a prophecy had been delivered. It is probable that the prophecy, attested by the names of those two men, was suspended in some public place in the temple, so that it might be seen by the people, and allay their fears; and in order to remove from the multitude every suspicion that it was *a prophecy after the event.* That this was a real, and not a symbolical transaction, is perfectly manifest, not only from the narrative itself, but from ver. 18. They are called 'faithful,' not on account of their private character, but because their public testimony would be credited by the people. ¶ *To record.* To bear witness. ¶ *Uriah the priest.* This is, doubtless, the same man that is mentioned in 2 Kings xvi. 10. He was a man of infamous character; the accomplice of Ahaz in corrupting the true religion; but still his testimony might be the more valuable to Ahaz, as he was associated with him in his plans. ¶ *And Zechariah,* &c. It is not certainly known who this was. Perhaps he was one of the Levites whose name is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxix. 13.

3. *Then said the* LORD, &c. The name thus given was to be emblematic of a particular event—that Assyria would soon take away the spoil of Damascus and Samaria. It is not remarkable that the name Immanuel should also be given to the same child, as signifying the presence and protection of God in defending the nation from the invaders; see Notes on ch. vii. 14, 15. Calvin thinks that all this passed in a *vision* before the prophet; but it has every mark of being a literal narrative of the birth of a son to Isaiah; and without this supposition, it is impossible to understand the account contained here.

4. *For before,* &c. This must have occurred in a short time—probably before the expiration of three years. A child would usually learn to address his parents in that time. *In fact,* the event here predicted occurred in less than three years from the time when the prophecy

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knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the [1] riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away [a] before the king of Assyria.

5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah [b] that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

[1] or, he that is before the king of Assyria shall take away the riches.

a 2 Ki.15.29; 16.9; 17.3. b Neh.3.15; Jn.9.7.

was spoken; see Notes on ch. vii. 16. ¶ *Before the king of Assyria.* By the king, or by his conquests. By the spoil of Samaria here, is to be understood, not the plunder which should be carried away from the city, but from the kingdom of Samaria. In other places, the land is called by the name of the capital; comp. 2 Kings xvii. 26; xxiii. 19; Jer. xxxi. 5. The *city* of Samaria was not plundered until eighteen years after the time here mentioned by the prophet; 5, 6. These verses introduce again what was predicted in ch. vii. 17, *sq.,* respecting the invasion of the land by the king of Assyria. The *cause* of the invasion is specified, and the consequences are foretold.

6. *Forasmuch as this people.* There has been a considerable difference of opinion among interpreters respecting the 'people' to whom the prophet here refers. Some have supposed that it refers to the kingdom of Judah alone; others to a *party* in that kingdom; and others to the kingdom of Judah in connection with the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel also. The latter is probably the correct interpretation. The prophet reproves the *whole* nation of the Jews for despising the mild and gentle reign of the family of David, and for seeking the aid of foreign nations; the ten tribes as seeking an alliance with Rezin and Pekah; and the kingdom of Judah as seeking an alliance with the king of Assyria. It was characteristic of the nation—both of the ten tribes, and of the tribe of Judah—that they forsook the defence which they had in themselves, and sought foreign alliances. Hence God says, that he will bring upon them the judgments which they deserve. That there is a joint reference to both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, is apparent from ver. 14. It cannot refer to the kingdom of Judah alone, for it could not be brought as an accusation against them, that they took pleasure in Rezin. In the opinion that it refers to the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah—to the whole Jewish people, Vitringa, Lowth, and Hengstenberg concur. ¶ *The waters of Shiloah that go softly.* That flow gently. The name Siloah, or Siloam, is found only three times in the Scriptures as applied to waters; once in this place, where it is spoken of a running water; once as a pool in Nehemiah—בְּרֵכַת הַשֶּׁלַח—ch. iii. 15, and again as a pool, in the account of the miracle of healing the man who was born blind; John ix. 7, 11. Siloam is on the east side of the city of Jerusalem, to the south-east of the site of the temple, and its waters flow into the valley of Jehoshaphat. The name means *sent,* or *sending,* from שָׁלַח *to send,* and was probably given to it because the waters were *sent* or made to pass through a subterranean passage or aqueduct.

At present, it properly consists of two receptacles or reservoirs, the waters from one of which flow into the other. The first, or upper one, is now called the 'Fountain of the Virgin,' from a tradition that it was here that the Virgin Mary resorted before her purification, in order to wash her child's linen. This fountain is on the west side of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and is about 1550 feet from the south-east corner of the city wall. The cavity of this fountain is wholly excavated in the solid rock. To enter it there is at first a descent of sixteen steps, to a level place or platform of twelve feet in diameter, and then another descent of ten steps to the water, making the whole depth twenty-five feet. The basin here is about fifteen feet long by five or six wide, and the height six or eight feet. There is some reason to suppose that this is supplied by a fountain lying under the mosque of Omar, on the site of the temple of Solomon. From this fountain the water is conducted by a subterranean passage, in a direction a little to the west of south to what is properly called the fountain of Siloam. This passage runs under the extremity of mount Ophel; is cut entirely from the solid rock, and is found by measurement to be 1750 feet in length. At the lower part it is from ten to fifteen feet in height by two in breadth; but in the middle so low, that it can be passed only by creeping on the hands and knees. The passage is partly filled up with sand. From this aqueduct the water is conveyed into the pool of Siloam, situated near where the Ty-

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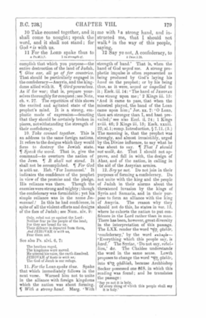

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10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God [a] *is* with us.

11 For the LORD spake thus to me with [1] a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk [b] in the way of this people, saying,

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to

[a] Ps.46.1,7. [1] in strength of. [b] Prov.1.15.

complish that which you purpose—the entire destruction of the land of Judah. ¶ *Give ear, all ye of far countries.* That should be particularly engaged in the confederacy—Assyria, and the kingdoms allied with it. ¶ *Gird yourselves.* As if for war; that is, prepare yourselves thoroughly for conquest; see Note, ch. v. 27. The *repetition* of this shows the excited and agitated state of the prophet's mind. It is a strong, emphatic mode of expression—denoting that they should be *certainly* broken in pieces, notwithstanding the strength of their confederacy.

10. *Take counsel together.* This is an address to the same foreign nations. It refers to the designs which they would form to destroy the Jewish state. ¶ *Speak the word.* That is, give the command—to overturn the nation of the Jews. ¶ *It shall not stand.* It shall not be accomplished. ¶ *For God is with us.* Heb. 'For Immanuel.' It indicates the confidence of the prophet in view of the promise and the pledge. His reliance was there. Though the enemies were strong and mighty; though the confederacy was formidable; yet his simple reliance was in the name *Immanuel!* In this he had confidence, in spite of all the violent efforts and designs of the foes of Judah; see Num. xiv. 9:

Only, rebel not ye against the Lord:
Neither fear ye the people of the land;
For they are bread for us;
Their defence is departed from them,
And JEHOVAH *is* with us,
Fear them not.

See also Ps. xlvi. 6, 7:

The heathen raged,
The kingdoms were moved,
He uttered his voice, the earth dissolved.
JEHOVAH *of hosts is with us;*
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

11. *For the* LORD *spake thus.* Spake that which immediately follows in the next verse. Warned him not to unite in the alliance with foreign kingdoms which the nation was about forming. ¶ *With a strong hand.* Marg. 'With strength of hand.' That is, when the hand of God *urged* me. A strong prophetic impulse is often represented as being produced by God's laying his *hand* on the prophet; or by his being thus, as it were, *urged* or *impelled* to it; Ezek. iii. 14: 'The hand of JEHOVAH was strong upon me;' 2 Kings iii. 15: 'And it came to pass, that when the minstrel played, the hand of the LORD came upon him;' Jer. xx. 7: 'O LORD, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed;' see also Eccl. ii. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 46; 2 Kings iii. 15; Ezek. xxxiii. 22; xl. 1; comp. Introduction, § 7. 11. (3.) The meaning is, that the prophet was strongly, and almost irresistibly, urged by the Divine influence, to say what he was about to say. ¶ *That I should not walk, &c.* That I should not approve, and fall in with, the design of Ahaz, and of the nation, in calling in the aid of the Assyrian armies.

12. *Say ye not.* Do not join in their purposes of forming a confederacy. Do not unite with the king and the people of Judah in their alarms about the threatened invasion by the kings of Syria and Samaria, and in their purpose to form an alliance with the king of Assyria. The reason why they should not do this, he states in ver. 13, where he exhorts the nation to put confidence in the Lord rather than in man. There has been, however, great diversity in the interpretation of this passage. The LXX. render the word קֶשֶׁר, *qĕshĕr*, 'confederacy,' by the word σκληρὸν—'Everything which this people say, is *hard.*' The Syriac, 'Do not say, *rebellion,*' &c. The Chaldee understands the word in the same sense. Lowth proposes to change the word קֶשֶׁר, *qĕshĕr*, into קָדוֹשׁ *qâdhôsh*, because Archbishop Secker possessed one MS. in which this reading was found; and he translates the passage:

'Say ye not it is holy,
Of every thing of which this people shall say
it is holy.'

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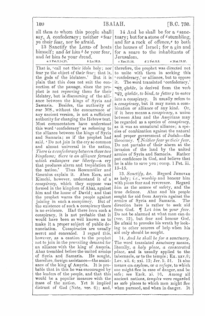

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all *them to* whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither [a] fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let* him [b] *be* your fear, and *let* him *be* your dread.

14 And he shall be for a [c] sanctuary; but for a stone of [d] stumbling, and for a rock of offence,[e] to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

[a] 1 Pet.3.14,15. [b] Lu.12.5. [c] Eze.11.16. [d] 1 Pet.2.8. [e] Mat.13.57.

That is, 'call not their *idols* holy; nor fear ye the object of their fear; that is, the gods of the idolaters.' But it is plain that this does not suit the connection of the passage, since the prophet is not reproving them for their idolatry, but is discoursing of the alliance between the kings of Syria and Samaria. Besides, the authority of *one* MS., without the concurrence of any ancient version, is not a sufficient authority for changing the Hebrew text. Most commentators have understood this word 'confederacy' as referring to the alliance between the kings of Syria and Samaria; as if the prophet had said, 'Do not join in the cry so common and almost universal in the nation, *There is a confederacy between those two kingdoms; there is an alliance formed which endangers our liberty*—a cry that produces alarm and trepidation in the nation.' Thus Rosenmüller and Gesenius explain it. Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, however, understand it of a *conspiracy*, which they suppose was formed in the kingdom of Ahaz, against him and the house of David; and that the prophet warns the people against joining in such a conspiracy. But of the existence of such a conspiracy there is no evidence. Had there *been* such a conspiracy, it is not probable that it would have been so well known as to make it a proper subject of public denunciation. Conspiracies are usually secret and concealed. I regard this, however, as a caution to the prophet not to join in the prevailing demand for an alliance with the king of Assyria. Ahaz trembled before the united armies of Syria and Samaria. He sought, therefore, foreign assistance—the assistance of the king of Assyria. It is probable that in this he was encouraged by the leaders of the people, and that this would be a popular measure with the mass of the nation. Yet it implied distrust of God (Note, ver. 6); and, therefore, the prophet was directed not to unite with them in seeking this 'confederacy,' or alliance, but to oppose it. The word translated 'confederacy,' קֶשֶׁר, *qĕshĕr*, is derived from the verb קָשַׁר, *qâshăr*, *to bind, to fetter;* to enter into a conspiracy. It usually refers to a *conspiracy*, but it may mean a combination or alliance of any kind. Or, if it here means a *conspiracy*, a union between Ahaz and the Assyrians may be regarded as a species of *conspiracy*, as it was an unnatural alliance; a species of combination against the natural and proper government of Judah—the theocracy. ¶ *Neither fear ye their fear.* Do not partake of their alarm at the invasion of the land by the united armies of Syria and Samaria. Rather put confidence in God, and believe that he is able to save you; comp. 1 Pet. iii. 13–15.

13. *Sanctify, &c.* Regard JEHOVAH as holy; *i.e.*, worship and honour him with pious fear and reverence. Regard *him* as the source of safety, and the true defence. Ahaz and his people sought for aid from Assyria against the armies of Syria and Samaria. The direction here is rather to seek aid from God. ¶ *Let him be your fear.* Do not be alarmed at what man can do (ver. 12), but fear and honour God. Be afraid to provoke his wrath by looking to other sources of help when his aid only should be sought.

14. *And he shall be for a sanctuary.* The word translated *sanctuary* means, literally, *a holy place, a consecrated place*, and is usually applied to the tabernacle, or to the temple; Ex. xxv. 8; Lev. xii. 4; xxi. 12; Jer. li. 51. It also means *an asylum*, or *a refuge*, to which one might flee in case of danger, and be safe; see Ezek. xi. 16. Among all ancient nations, *temples* were regarded as safe places to which men might flee when pursued, and when in danger. It

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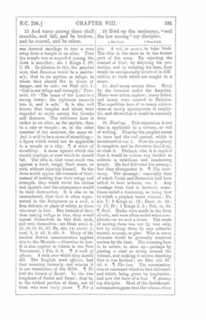

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER VIII. 181

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16 Bind up the testimony, [a] seal the law among [b] my disciples.

[a] Re.5.1,5. [b] Prov.8.8,9.

was deemed sacrilege to tear a man away from a temple or an altar. That the temple was so regarded among the Jews is manifest; see 1 Kings i. 50; ii. 28. In allusion to this, the prophet says, that JEHOVAH would be a sanctuary; that is, an asylum, or refuge, to whom they should flee in times of danger, and be safe; see Psal. xlvi. 1: 'God is our refuge and strength;' Prov. xviii. 10: 'The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' It is also well known that temples and altars were regarded as *asyla* among the Greeks and Romans. The reference here is rather to *an altar*, as the asylum, than to a city or temple; as, in the other member of the sentence, the same object is said to be a stone of stumbling—a figure which would not be applicable to a temple or a city. ¶ *A stone of stumbling.* A stone against which one should impinge, or over which he should fall. The idea is, that none could run against a hard, rough, fixed stone, or rock, without injuring himself. So the Jews would oppose the counsels of God; instead of making him their refuge and strength, they would resist his claims and appeals, and the consequence would be their destruction. It is also to be remembered, that God is often represented in the Scriptures as a *rock*, a firm defence, or place of safety, to those who trust in him. But instead of their thus taking refuge in him, they would oppose themselves to this firm rock, and ruin themselves; see Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37; Ps. xix. 14; xxviii. 1; xxxi. 2, 3; xlii. 2; xliii. 9. Many of the ancient Jewish commentators applied this to the Messiah.—*Gesenius in loco.* It is also applied to Christ in the New Testament, 1 Pet. ii. 8. ¶ *A rock of offence.* A rock over which they should fall. The English word *offence*, had that meaning formerly, and retains it in our translation of the Bible. ¶ *To both the houses of Israel.* To the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel; that is, to the wicked portion of them, not to those who were truly pious. ¶ *For a gin.* A *net*, or *snare*, to take birds. The idea is the same as in the former part of the verse. By rejecting the counsel of God; by despising his protection, and by resisting his laws, they would be unexpectedly involved in difficulties, as birds which are caught in a snare.

15. *And many among them.* Many by the invasion under the Assyrian. Many were taken captive; many killed, and many were carried to Babylon. The repetition here of so many expressions so nearly synonymous is emphatic, and shows that it would be certainly done.

16. *Bind up.* This expression is one that is applicable to a *volume*, or *roll* of writing. Thus far the prophet seems to have had the *roll* opened, which is mentioned in ver. 1. Now the prophecy is complete, and he directs to bind it up, or close it. Perhaps, also, it is implied that it would be useless any further to address a rebellious and headstrong people. He had delivered his message, but they disregarded it. ¶ *The testimony.* The message; especially that of which Uriah and Zechariah had been called *to bear witness*, ver. 2. Any message from God is, however, sometimes called a *testimony*, as being that to which a prophet bears witness; Ps. xix. 7; 2 Kings xi. 12; Deut. iv. 45; vi. 17, 20; 1 Kings ii. 3; Neh. ix. 34. ¶ *Seal.* Books were made in the form of rolls, and were often sealed when completed—as we seal a letter. The mode of sealing them was not by wax only, but by uniting them by any adhesive matter, as paste, or glue. Wax in warm climates would be generally rendered useless by the heat. The meaning here is, to secure, to close up—perhaps by passing a cord or string around the volume, and making it secure, denoting that it was finished; see Dan. viii. 26; xii. 4. ¶ *The law.* The communication or command which he had delivered, and which, being given by inspiration, had now the force of a *law*. ¶ *Among my disciples.* Most of the Jewish commentators suppose that the volume, when

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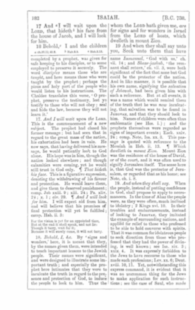

182 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

17 And [a] I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth [b] his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Behold, [c] 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.

19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have

[illegible]

completed by a prophet, was given for safe keeping to his disciples, or to some employed to preserve it securely. The word *disciples* means those who are *taught*, and here means those who were taught by the prophet; perhaps the pious and holy part of the people who would listen to his instructions. The Chaldee translates this verse, 'O prophet, preserve the testimony, lest ye testify to those who will not obey; seal and hide the law, because they will not learn it.'

17. *And I will wait upon the* LORD. This is the commencement of a new subject. The prophet had closed his former message; but had seen that in regard to the great mass of the nation, his exhortation had been in vain. He now says, that having delivered his message, he would patiently look to God alone. His hope was in him, though the nation looked elsewhere; and though calamities were coming, yet he would still trust in God only. ¶ *That hideth his face.* This is a figurative expression, denoting the withdrawing of his favour and protection. He would leave them, and give them to deserved punishment; comp. Job xxiii. 9; xiii. 24; Ps. xliv. 24; x. 1; civ. 29. ¶ *And I will look for him.* I will expect aid from him, and will believe that his promises of final protection will yet be fulfilled; comp. Hab. ii. 3:

For the vision is yet for an appointed time,
But at the end it shall speak, and not lie:
Though it tarry, wait for it;
Because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

18. *Behold, I, &c.* By 'signs and wonders,' here, it is meant that they, by the names given them, were intended to teach important lessons to the Jewish people. Their names were significant, and were designed to illustrate some important truth; and especially the prophet here intimates that they were to inculcate the truth in regard to the presence and protection of God, to induce the people to look to him. Thus the name *Immanuel*, 'God with us,' ch. vii. 14; and *Shear-jashub*, 'the remnant shall return,' ch. vii. 3, were both significant of the fact that none but God could be the protector of the nation. And in like manner, it is possible that his own name, signifying the *salvation of Jehovah*, had been given him with such a reference. But at all events, it was a name which would remind them of the truth that he was *now* inculcating, that salvation was to be found in JEHOVAH, and that they should look to him. Names of children were often thus emblematic (see Hos. i.); and the prophets themselves were regarded as signs of important events; Ezek. xxiv. 24; comp. Note, Isa. xx. 3. This passage is quoted with reference to the Messiah in Heb. ii. 13. ¶ *Which dwelleth in mount Zion.* Mount Zion was the residence of the house of David, or of the court, and it was often used to signify Jerusalem itself. The sense here is, that God was the protector of Jerusalem, or regarded that as his home; see Note, ch. i. 8.

19. *And when they shall say.* When the people, instead of putting confidence in God, shall propose to apply to necromancers. In the time of Ahaz the people were, as they were often, much inclined to idolatry; 2 Kings xvi. 10. In their troubles and embarrassments, instead of looking to JEHOVAH, they imitated the example of surrounding nations, and applied for relief to those who professed to be able to hold converse with spirits. That it was common for idolatrous people to seek direction from those who professed that they had the power of divining, is well known; see Isa. xix. 3; xxix. 4. It was expressly forbidden to the Jews to have recourse to those who made such professions; Lev. xx. 6; Deut. xviii. 10, 11. Yet, notwithstanding this express command, it is evident that it was no uncommon thing for the Jews to make application for such instructions; see the case of Saul, who made

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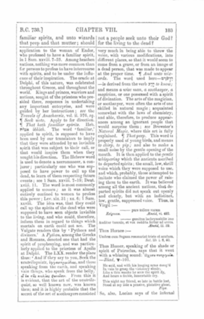

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER VIII. 183

familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

application to the woman of Endor, who professed to have a familiar spirit, in 1 Sam. xxviii. 7–25. Among heathen nations, nothing was more common than for persons to profess to have intercourse with spirits, and to be under the influence of their inspiration. The oracle at Delphi, of this nature, was celebrated throughout Greece, and throughout the world. Kings and princes, warriors and nations, sought of the priestess who presided there, responses in undertaking any important enterprise, and were guided by her instructions; *see* the *Travels of Anacharsis*, vol. ii. 376, *sq.* ¶ *Seek unto.* Apply to for direction. ¶ *That hath familiar spirits.* Heb. אֹבוֹת *ôbhôth.* The word 'familiar,' applied to spirit, is supposed to have been used by our translators to imply that they were attended by an invisible spirit that was subject to their call, or that would inspire them when they sought his direction. The Hebrew word is used to denote a necromancer, a conjurer; particularly one who was supposed to have power to call up the dead, to learn of them respecting future events; see 1 Sam. xxviii. 7–19; Deut. xviii. 11. The word is most commonly applied to *women*; as it was almost entirely confined to women to profess this power; Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6; 1 Sam. xxviii. The idea was, that they could call up the spirits of the dead who were supposed to have seen objects invisible to the living, and who could, therefore, inform them in regard to things which mortals on earth could not see. The Vulgate renders this by 'Pythons and diviners.' A *Python*, among the Greeks and Romans, denoted one that had the spirit of prophesying, and was particularly applied to the priestess of Apollo at Delphi. The LXX. render the place thus: 'And if they say to you, Seek the *ventriloquists*, ἐγγαστριμύθους, and those speaking from the earth, and speaking vain things, who speak from the belly,' οἳ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας φωνοῦσιν. From this it is evident, that the art of the *ventriloquist*, so well known now, was known then; and it is highly probable that the secret of the art of soothsayers consisted very much in being able to throw the voice, with various modifications, into different places, so that it would seem to come from a grave, or from an image of a dead person, that was made to appear at the proper time. ¶ *And unto wizards.* The word used here—יִדְּעֹנִים—is derived from the verb יָדַע *to know;* and means a *wise man, a soothsayer, a magician*, or one possessed with a spirit of divination. The arts of the magician, or soothsayer, were often the arts of one skilled in natural magic; acquainted somewhat with the laws of chemistry; and able, therefore, to produce appearances among an ignorant people that would surprise them; *see* Brewster's *Natural Magic*, where this art is fully explained. ¶ *That peep.* This word is properly used of young birds, and means *to chirp, to pip;* and also to make a small noise by the gentle opening of the mouth. It is then applied to the *gentle whispering* which the ancients ascribed to departed spirits; the small, low, shrill voice which they were supposed to use, and which, probably, those attempted to imitate who claimed the power of raising them to the earth. It was believed among all the ancient nations, that departed spirits did not speak out openly and clearly, but with an indistinct, low, gentle, suppressed voice. Thus, in Virgil:—

—— pars tollere vocem
Exiguam. *Æneid*, vi. 492.

—— gemitus lachrymabilis imo
Auditur tumulo, et vox reddita fertur ad aures.
Æneid, iii. 39.

Thus Horace:—

Umbrae cum Sagana resonarint triste et acutum.
Sat. lib i. 8, 40.

Thus Homer, speaking of the shade or spirit of Patroclus, says that it went with a whizzing sound: ᾤχετο τετριγυῖα.—*Iliad*, Ψ-101.

He said, and with his longing arms essay'd
In vain to grasp the visionary shade;
Like a thin smoke he sees the spirit fly,
And hears a feeble, lamentable cry.

This night my friend, so late in battle lost,
Stood at my side a pensive, plaintive ghost.
Pope.

So, also, Lucian says of the infernal

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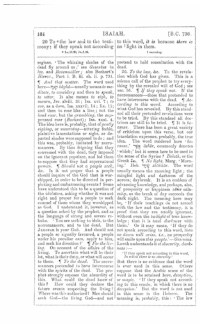

184 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

20 To [a] the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no [1] light in them.

[a] Lu.16.29; Jn.5.39. [1] morning.

regions, 'The whizzing shades of the dead fly around us;' see *Gesenius in loc.* and *Rosenmüller;* also Bochart's *Hieroz.*, Part i. B. iii. ch. ii. p. 731. ¶ *And that mutter.* The word used here—הָגָה *hâghâ*—usually means *to meditate, to consider;* and then *to speak, to utter.* It also means *to sigh, to mourn*, Jer. xlviii. 31; Isa. xvi. 7; *to coo*, as a dove, Isa. xxxvii. 14; lix. 11; and then to roar like a lion; not the *loud roar*, but the *grumbling*, the *suppressed* roar (*Bochart*); Isa. xxxi. 4. The idea here is, probably, that of *gently sighing*, or *mourning*—uttering feeble, plaintive lamentations or sighs, as departed shades were supposed to do; and this was, probably, imitated by necromancers. By thus feigning that they conversed with the dead, they imposed on the ignorant populace, and led them to suppose that they had supernatural powers. ¶ *Should not a people seek, &c.* Is it not proper that a people should inquire of the God that is worshipped, in order to be directed in perplexing and embarrassing events? Some have understood this to be a question of the *idolaters*, asking whether it was not right and proper for a people to seek counsel of those whom they worshipped as God. I understand it, however, as a question asked by the prophet, and as the language of strong and severe rebuke. 'You are seeking to idols, to the necromancers, and to the dead. But JEHOVAH is your God. And should not a people so signally favoured, a people under his peculiar *care*, apply to him, and seek his direction?' ¶ *For the living.* On account of the affairs of the living. To ascertain what will be their lot, what is their duty, or what will occur to them. ¶ *To the dead.* The necromancers pretended to have intercourse with the spirits of the dead. The prophet strongly exposes the absurdity of this. What could the *dead* know of this? How could they declare the future events respecting the living? Where was this authorized? Men should seek God—the living God—and not pretend to hold consultation with the dead.

20. *To the law, &c.* To the revelation which God has given. This is a solemn call of the prophet to try everything by the revealed will of God; see ver. 16. ¶ *If they speak not.* If the necromancers—those that pretended to have intercourse with the dead. ¶ *According to this word.* According to what God has revealed. By this standard all their pretended revelations were to be tried. By this standard all doctrines are still to be tried. ¶ *It is because.* There has been a great variety of criticism upon this verse, but our translation expresses, probably, the true idea. The word rendered here 'because,' אֲשֶׁר *ăshĕr*, commonly denotes 'which;' but it seems here to be used in the sense of the Syriac ? *Dolath*, or the Greek ὅτι. ¶ *No light.* Marg. 'Morning.' Heb. שַׁחַר *shâhhăr.* The word usually means the morning light; the mingled light and darkness of the aurora; daybreak. It is an emblem of advancing knowledge, and perhaps, also, of prosperity or happiness after calamity, as the break of day succeeds the dark night. The meaning here may be, 'If their teachings do not accord with the law and the testimony, it is proof that they are *totally* ignorant, without even the *twilight* of true knowledge; that it is *total darkness* with them.' Or it may mean, 'If they do not speak according to this word, *then no dawn will arise, i.e.*, no prosperity will smile upon *this people.*'—*Gesenius.* Lowth understands it of *obscurity, darkness*:—

'If they speak not according to this word,
In which there is no obscurity.'

But there is no evidence that the word is ever used in this sense. Others suppose that the Arabic sense of the word is to be retained here, *deception*, or *magic.* 'If they speak not according to this oracle, in which there is no *deception*.' But the word is not used in this sense in the Hebrew. The meaning is, probably, this: 'The law

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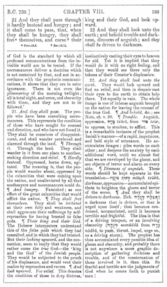

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER VIII. 185

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[a] themselves, and curse[b] their king and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and *they shall be* driven to darkness.

[a] Prov.19.3. [b] Rev.16.11.

of God is the standard by which all professed communications from the invisible world are to be tested. If the necromancers deliver a doctrine which is not sustained by that, and not in accordance with the prophetic communications, it shows that they are in utter ignorance. There is not even the *glimmering* of the morning twilight; all is total night, and error, and obscurity with them, and they are not to be followed.'

21. *And they shall pass.* The people who have been consulting necromancers. This represents the condition of those who have sought for counsel and direction, and who have not found it. They shall be conscious of disappointment, and shall wander perplexed and alarmed through the land. ¶ *Through it.* Through the land. They shall wander in it from one place to another, seeking direction and relief. ¶ *Hardly bestead.* Oppressed, borne down, agitated. The meaning is, that the people would wander about, oppressed by the calamities that were coming upon the nation, and unalleviated by all that soothsayers and necromancers could do. ¶ *And hungry.* Famished; as one effect of the great calamities that would afflict the nation. ¶ *They shall fret themselves.* They shall be irritated at their own folly and weakness, and shall aggravate their sufferings by self-reproaches for having trusted to false gods. ¶ *Their king and their God.* The Hebrew interpreters understand this of the *false gods* which they had consulted, and in which they had trusted. But their *looking upward*, and the connection, seem to imply that they would rather curse the *true* God—the 'king and the God' of the Jewish people. They would be subjected to the proofs of his displeasure, and would vent their malice by reproaches and curses. ¶ *And look upward.* For relief. This denotes the condition of those in deep distress, instinctively casting their eyes to heaven for aid. Yet it is implied that they would do it with no right feeling, and that they would see there only the tokens of their Creator's displeasure.

22. *And they shall look unto the earth.* They would look upward and find no relief, and then in despair cast their eyes to the earth to obtain help there. Yet equally in vain. The whole image is one of intense anguish brought on the nation for leaving the counsel of the true God. ¶ *And behold, &c.*; see Note, ch. v. 30. ¶ *Trouble.* Anguish, oppression, צָרָה *tsârâ*, from צוּר *tsûr*, to oppress, to straiten, to afflict. This is a remarkable instance of the prophet Isaiah's manner—of a rapid, impetuous, and bold style of utterance. He accumulates images; piles words on each other; and deepens the anxiety by each additional word, until we almost feel that we are enveloped by the gloom, and see objects of terror and alarm on every side. ¶ *Dimness of anguish.* These words should be kept separate in the translation—מְעוּף צוּקָה *mâûph tsûkâ*, *darkness, oppression*—accumulated epithets to heighten the gloom and terror of the scene. ¶ *And they shall be driven to darkness.* Heb. וַאֲפֵלָה מְנֻדָּח a darkness that is *driven*, or that is urged upon itself; that becomes condensed, accumulated, until it becomes terrible and frightful. The idea is that of a driving tempest, or an involving obscurity (מְנֻדָּח *menuddâ* from נָדַח *nâdâh*, to push, thrust, impel, urge on, as a driving storm). The prophet has thus accumulated every possible idea of gloom and obscurity, and probably there is not anywhere a more graphic description of gathering darkness and trouble, and of the consternation of those involved in it, than this. So fearful and terrific are the judgments of God when he comes forth to punish men!

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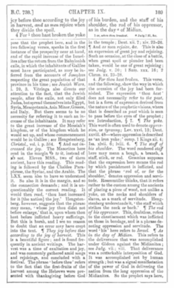

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER IX. 189

joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, *and* as *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For [1] thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day [a] of Midian.

[1] or, when thou brakest. [a] Judg 7.22, &c.

pose that the prophet here, and in the two following verses, speaks in the first instance of the prosperity near at hand, and of the rapid increase of the Israelites after the return from the Babylonish exile, in which the inhabitants of Galilee must have participated, as may be inferred from the accounts of *Josephus* respecting the great population of that province in his time; see *Jewish Wars*, i. 20, 3. Vitringa also directs our attention to the fact, that the Jewish people, after the exile, not only filled Judea, but spread themselves into Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. But there seems to be no necessity for referring it to such an increase of the inhabitants. It may refer to the great increase of the Messiah's kingdom, or of the kingdom which he would set up, and whose commencement would be in Galilee; *see* Hengstenberg, *Christol.*, vol. i. p. 354. ¶ *And not increased the joy.* The Masorites here read in the margin לוֹ *to it*, instead of לֹא *not*. Eleven MSS., two of them ancient, have this reading. This reading is followed by the Chaldee Paraphrase, the Syriac, and the Arabic. The LXX. seem also to have so understood it. So also it is in the margin, and so the connection demands; and it is unquestionably the correct reading. It would then read, 'thou hast increased for it [the nation] the joy.' Hengstenberg, however, suggests that the phrase may mean, 'whose joy thou didst not before enlarge,' that is, upon whom thou hast before inflicted heavy sufferings. But this is harsh, and I see no reason to doubt that an error may have crept into the text. ¶ *They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest.* This is a beautiful figure; and is found frequently in ancient writings. The harvest was a time of exultation and joy, and was commonly gathered amid songs and rejoicings, and concluded with a festival. The phrase 'before thee' refers to the fact that the first-fruits of the harvest among the Hebrews were presented with thanksgiving before God in the temple; Deut. xii. 7; xiv. 22–26. ¶ And *as men rejoice*, &c. This is also an expression of great joy and rejoicing. Such an occasion, at the close of a battle, when great spoil or plunder had been taken, would be one of great rejoicing; see Judg. v. 30; 1 Sam. xxx. 16; 2 Chron. xx. 25–28.

4. *For thou hast broken.* This verse, and the following, show the way in which the occasion of the joy had been furnished. The expression 'thou *hast*' does not necessarily refer to *the past*, but is a form of expression derived from the nature of the prophetic visions, where that is described as *past* which is seen to pass before the eyes of the prophet; see Introduction, § 7. ¶ *The yoke.* This word is often used to denote *oppression, or tyranny;* Lev. xxvi. 13; Deut. xxviii. 48—where oppression is described as 'an iron yoke;' comp. 1 Kings xii. 4; Isa. xlvii. 6; lviii. 6. ¶ *The staff of his shoulder.* The word rendered *staff* here may mean a bough, a branch, a staff, stick, or rod. Gesenius supposes that the expression here means the rod by which punishment is inflicted, and that the phrase 'rod of, or for the shoulder,' denotes oppression and servitude. Rosenmüller thinks, that it refers rather to the custom among the ancients of placing a piece of wood, not unlike a yoke, on the necks and shoulders of slaves, as a mark of servitude. Hengstenberg understands it, 'the staff which strikes the neck or back.' ¶ *The rod of his oppressor.* This, doubtless, refers to the chastisement which was inflicted on those in bondage, and is a phrase denoting oppression and servitude. The word 'his' here refers to *Israel.* ¶ *As in the day of Midian.* This refers to the deliverance that was accomplished under Gideon against the Midianites; see Judg. vii.; viii. That deliverance was a remarkable interposition of God. It was accomplished not by human strength; but was a signal manifestation of the power of God in delivering the nation from the long oppression of the Midianites. So the prophet says here,

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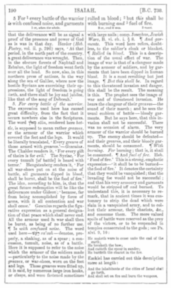

190 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

5 For [1] every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; [2] but *this* shall be with burning *and* [3] fuel of fire.

[1] or, when the whole. [2] or, and it was. [3] meat.

that the deliverance will be as signal a proof of the presence and power of God as is was in that day. Herder (*Heb. Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 296) says, 'At that period, in the north part of the country, a great deliverance was wrought. Then, in the obscure forests of Naphtali and Zebulun, the light of freedom went forth over all the land. So now, also, in this northern press of nations, in the way along the sea of Galilee, where now the hostile Syrians are exercising their oppressions, the light of freedom is going forth, and there shall be joy and jubilee, like that of the song of Deborah.'

5. *For every battle of the warrior.* The expression used here has caused great difficulty, from the fact that it occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. The word סְאוֹן *sĕôn*, rendered here *battle*, is supposed to mean rather *greaves*, or the armour of the warrior which covered the feet and the legs. It would be literally translated, 'Every greave of those armed with greaves.'—*Gesenius*. The Chaldee renders it, 'For every gift of theirs is for evil.' The Syriac, 'For every tumult [of battle] is heard with terror.' Hengstenberg renders it, 'For all war-shoes put on at the noise of battle, all garments dipped in blood, shall be burnt, shall be the food of fire.' The idea, according to him, is, that the great future redemption will be like the deliverance under Gideon; 'because, far from being accomplished by force of arms, with it all contention and war shall cease.' Gesenius regards the figurative expression as a general designation of that peace which shall never end. All the armour used in war shall then be burnt, as being of no further use. ¶ Is *with confused noise.* The word used here—רַעַשׁ *ra'ash*—denotes, properly, a shaking, as of a spear; a concussion, tumult, noise, as of a battle. Here it is supposed to refer to the noise which the armour of the soldiers made—particularly to the noise made by the *greaves*, or war-shoes, worn on the feet and legs. Those greaves were fitted up, it is said, by numerous large iron hooks, or clasps, and were fastened sometimes with large nails; comp. Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, B. vi. ch. i. § 8. ¶ *And garments.* This word here refers, doubtless, to the soldier's cloak or blanket. ¶ *Rolled in blood.* This is a description of the usual effect of war. The image of war is that of a clangour made by the armour of soldiers, and by garments that have been dipped in human blood. It is a most revolting but just image. ¶ *But this shall be.* In regard to this threatened invasion and danger, this shall be the result. The meaning is this. The prophet sees the image of war and of threatened invasion. He hears the clangour of their greaves—the sound of their march; and he sees the usual emblem of battle—bloody garments. But he says here, that this invasion shall not be successful. There was no occasion of alarm. The very armour of the warrior should be burned up. The enemy should be defeated—and their greaves, and their bloody garments, should be consumed. ¶ *With burning. For* burning; that is, it shall be consumed. ¶ And *fuel of fire.* Heb. 'Food of fire.' This is a strong, emphatic expression—'it shall be to be burned—the food of fire.' It denotes the certainty that they would be vanquished; that the invading foe would not be successful; and that his very armoury and garments would be stripped off and burned. To understand this, it is necessary to remark, that in ancient times it was customary to strip the dead which were slain in a vanquished army, and to collect their armour, their chariots, &c., and consume them. The more valued spoils of battle were reserved as the prey of the victors, or to be suspended in temples consecrated to the gods; see Ps. xlvi. 9, 10:

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow;
And cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.

Ezekiel has carried out this description more at length:

And the inhabitants of the cities of Israel shall go forth,
And shall set on fire and burn the weapons,

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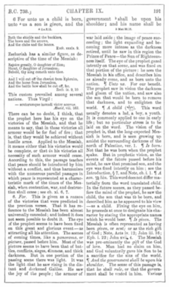

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6 For unto us a child is born, unto [a] us a son is given, and the government [b] shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be

[a] Is 7.14. [b] Mat 28.18.

Both the shields and the bucklers,
The bows and the arrows,
And the clubs and the lances.
Ezek. xxxix. 9.

Zechariah has a similar figure, as descriptive of the time of the Messiah:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem;
Behold, thy king cometh unto thee.

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the battle bow shall be cut off, &c.
Zech. ix. 9, 10

This custom prevailed among several nations. Thus Virgil:

— scutorumque incendi victor acervos.
Æneid, viii. 562.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the prophet here has his eye on the victories of the Messiah, and that he means to say, that in those victories all armour would be for fuel of fire; that is, that they would be achieved without hostile arms. Applied to the Messiah, it means either that his victories would be complete, or that in his victories all necessity of such armour would cease. According to this, the passage teaches that peace should be introduced by him without a conflict, and thus harmonizes with the numerous parallel passages in which peace is represented as a characteristic mark of the times of the Messiah, when contention, war, and destruction shall cease; see ch. xi. 6, 7.

6. *For.* This is given as a *reason* of the victories that were predicted in the previous verses. That it has reference to the Messiah has been almost universally conceded; and indeed it does not seem possible to doubt it. The eye of the prophet seems to have been fixed on this great and glorious event—as attracting all his attention. The scenes of coming times, like a *panorama*, or *picture*, passed before him. Most of the picture seems to have been that of battles, conflicts, sieges, dimness, and thick darkness. But in one portion of the passing scene there was light. It was the light that he saw rising in the distant and darkened Galilee. He saw the joy of the people; the armour of war laid aside; the image of peace succeeding; the light expanding and becoming more intense as the darkness retired, until he saw in this region the Prince of Peace—the Sun of Righteousness itself. The eye of the prophet gazed intently on that scene, and was fixed on that portion of the picture: he sees the Messiah in his office, and describes him as already come, and as born unto the nation. ¶ *Unto us.* For our benefit. The prophet saw in vision the darkness and gloom of the nation, and saw also the son that would be born to remove that darkness, and to enlighten the world. ¶ *A child* (יֶלֶד). This word usually denotes a lad, a boy, a youth. It is commonly applied to one in early life; but no particular stress is to be laid on the word. The vision of the prophet is, that the long-expected Messiah is born, and is seen growing up amidst the surrounding darkness of the north of Palestine, ver. 1. ¶ *Is born.* Not that he was born when the prophet spake. But in prophetic vision, as the events of the future passed before his mind, he saw that promised son, and the eye was fixed intently on him; see the Introduction, § 7, and Note, ch. i. 1. ¶ *A son.* בֵּן *bēn.* This word does not differ materially from the word translated *child.* In the future scenes, as they passed before the mind of the prophet, he saw the child, the son that was to be born, and described him as he appeared to his view—as a child. Fixing the eye on him, he proceeds at once to designate his character by stating the appropriate names which he would bear. ¶ *Is given.* The Messiah is often represented as having been *given*, or *sent;* or as the rich gift of God; Note, Acts iv. 12; John iii. 16; Eph. i. 22; John xvii. 4. The Messiah was pre-eminently the *gift* of the God of love. Man had no claim on him, and God voluntarily gave his Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. ¶ *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.* The sense of this passage is, that he shall *rule*, or that the government shall be vested in him. Various

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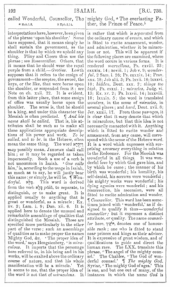

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called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,[a] The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.[b]

a Heb.1.8. b Eph.2.14.

interpretations have, however, been given of the phrase 'upon his shoulder.' Some have supposed, that it means simply he shall sustain the government, as the shoulder is that by which we uphold any thing. Pliny and Cicero thus use the phrase; see Rosenmüller. Others, that it means that he should wear the royal purple from a child.—*Grotius.* Lowth supposes that it refers to the ensign of government—the sceptre, the sword, the keys, or the like, that were borne upon the shoulder, or suspended from it; see Note on ch. xxii. 22. It is evident, from this latter place, that some ensign of office was usually borne upon the shoulder. The sense is, that he should be a king, and under this character the Messiah is often predicted. ¶ *And his name shall be called.* That is, his attributes shall be such as to make all these applications appropriate descriptions of his power and work. *To be called,* and *to be,* in the Hebrew, often mean the same thing. The word יִקְרָא may possibly mean, JEHOVAH shall call him; or it may be regarded as taken impersonally. Such a use of a verb is not uncommon in Isaiah. '*One calls him,*' is, according to the usage in Isaiah, as much as to say, he will justly bear this name; or simply, he will be. ¶ *Wonderful.* פֶּלֶא. This word is derived from the verb פָּלָא pâlâ, to separate, to distinguish, or to make great. It is applied usually to anything that is great or wonderful, as a miracle; Ex. xv. 2; Lam. i. 9; Dan. xii. 6. It is applied here to denote the unusual and remarkable assemblage of qualities that distinguished the Messiah. Those are specified more particularly in the other part of the verse; such an assemblage of qualities as to make proper the names Mighty God, &c. 'The proper idea of the word,' says Hengstenberg, 'is *miraculous.* It imports that the personage here referred to, in his being and in his works, will be exalted above the ordinary course of nature, and that his whole manifestation will be a miracle.' Yet it seems to me, that the proper idea of the word is not that of *miraculous.* It is rather that which is *separated* from the ordinary course of events, and which is fitted to excite amazement, wonder, and admiration, whether it be miraculous or not. This will be apparent if the following places are examined, where the word occurs in various forms. It is rendered *marvellous,* Ps. cxviii. 23; cxxxix. 14; xcviii. 1; Job v. 9; *wonderful,* 2 Sam. i. 26; Ps. cxxxix. 14; Prov. xxx. 18; Job xlii. 3; Ps. lxxii. 18; lxxxvi. 10; *hidden,* Deut. xxx. 2; *things too high,* Ps. cxxxi. 1; *miracles,* Judg. vi. 13; Ex. xv. 2; Ps. lxxvii. 14; lxxxviii. 10; lxxxix. 5; the word is translated *wonders,* in the sense of *miracles,* in several places; and *hard,* Deut. xvii. 8; Jer. xxxii. 17. From these passages, it is clear that it *may* denote that which is miraculous, but that this idea is not necessarily connected with it. Anything which is fitted to excite wonder and amazement, from any cause, will correspond with the sense of the Hebrew word. It is a word which expresses with surprising accuracy everything in relation to the Redeemer. For the Messiah was *wonderful* in all things. It was wonderful love by which God gave him, and by which he came; the manner of his birth was wonderful; his humility, his self-denial, his sorrows were wonderful; his mighty works were wonderful; his dying agonies were wonderful; and his resurrection, his ascension, were all fitted to excite admiration and wonder. ¶ *Counsellor.* This word has been sometimes joined with 'wonderful,' as if designed to qualify it thus—*wonderful counsellor;* but it expresses a distinct attribute, or quality. The name *counsellor* here, יוֹעֵץ, denotes one of honourable rank; one who is fitted to stand near princes and kings as their adviser. It is expressive of great wisdom, and of qualifications to guide and direct the human race. The LXX. translate this phrase, 'The angel of the mighty counsel.' The Chaldee, 'The God of wonderful counsel.' ¶ *The mighty God.* Syriac, 'The mighty God of ages.' This is one, and but one out of many, of the instances in which the name *God* is

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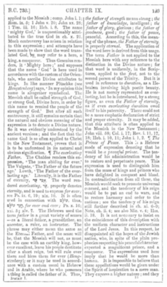

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applied to the Messiah; comp. John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5; 1 John v. 20; John xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 8. The name 'mighty God,' is unquestionably attributed to the true God in ch. x. 21. Much controversy has arisen in relation to this expression; and attempts have been made to show that the word translated God, אֵל, may refer to a hero, a king, a conqueror. Thus Gesenius renders, it 'Mighty hero;' and supposes that the name 'God' is here used in accordance with the custom of the Orientals, who ascribe Divine attributes to kings. In like manner Plüschke (see *Hengstenberg*) says, 'In my opinion this name is altogether symbolical. The Messiah shall be called strength of God, or strong God, Divine hero, in order by this name to remind the people of the strength of God.' But after all such controversy, it still remains certain that the natural and obvious meaning of the expression is to denote a Divine nature. So it was evidently understood by the ancient versions; and the fact that the name God is so often applied to Christ in the New Testament, proves that it is to be understood in its natural and obvious signification. ¶ *The everlasting Father.* The Chaldee renders this expression, 'The man abiding for ever.' The Vulgate, 'The Father of the future age.' Lowth, 'The Father of the everlasting age.' Literally, it is the Father of eternity, אֲבִי עַד. The word rendered *everlasting,* עַד, properly denotes *eternity,* and is used to express *for ever;* see Ps. ix. 6, 19; xix. 10. It is often used in connection with עוֹלָם, thus, לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, *for ever and ever;* Ps. x. 16; xxi. 5; xlv. 7. The Hebrews used the term *father* in a great variety of senses—as a literal father, a grandfather, an ancestor, a ruler, an instructor. The phrase may either mean the same as the Eternal Father, and the sense will be, that the Messiah will not, as must be the case with an earthly king, however excellent, leave his people destitute after a short reign, but will rule over them and bless them for ever (*Hengstenberg*); or it may be used in accordance with a custom usual in Hebrew and in Arabic, where he who possesses a thing is called the father of it. Thus, *the father of strength* means strong; *the father of knowledge,* intelligent; *the father of glory,* glorious; *the father of goodness,* good; *the father of peace,* peaceful. According to this, the meaning of the phrase, *the Father of eternity,* is properly *eternal.* The application of the word here is derived from this usage. The term *Father* is not applied to the Messiah here with any reference to the distinction in the Divine nature; for that word is uniformly, in the Scriptures, applied to the *first,* not to the second person of the Trinity. But it is used in reference to *duration,* as a Hebraism involving high poetic beauty. He is not merely represented as everlasting, but he is introduced, by a strong figure, as even *the Father of eternity,* as if even *everlasting duration* owed itself to his paternity. There could not be a more emphatic declaration of strict and proper eternity. It may be added, that *this* attribute is often applied to the Messiah in the New Testament; John viii. 58; Col. i. 17; Rev. i. 11, 17, 18; Heb. i. 10, 11; John i. 1, 2. ¶ *The Prince of Peace.* This is a Hebrew mode of expression denoting that he would be *a peaceful prince.* The tendency of his administration would be to restore and perpetuate peace. This expression is used to distinguish him from the mass of kings and princes who have delighted in conquest and blood. In contradistinction from all these, the Messiah would seek to promote universal concord, and the tendency of his reign would be to put an end to wars, and to restore harmony and order to the nations; see the tendency of his reign still farther described in ch. xi. 6–9; Note, ch. ii. 4; see also Mic. v. 4; Hos. ii. 18. It is not necessary to insist on the coincidence of this description with the uniform character and instructions of the Lord Jesus. In this respect, he disappointed all the hopes of the Jewish nation, who, in spite of the plain prophecies respecting his peaceful character expected a magnificent prince, and a conqueror. The expressions used here imply that he would be more than human. It is impossible to believe that these appellations would be given under the Spirit of inspiration to a mere man. They express a higher nature; and they

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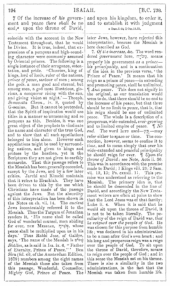

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7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end,[a] upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment

a Dan.2.44; 1 Cor.15.25.

coincide with the account in the New Testament throughout, that he would be Divine. It is true, indeed, that expressions of a pompous and high-sounding character were commonly assumed by Oriental princes. The following is a single instance of their arrogance, ostentation, and pride. 'Chosroes, king of kings, lord of lords, ruler of the nations, *prince of peace,* saviour of men; among the gods, a man good and eternal, but among men, a god most illustrious, glorious, a conqueror rising with the sun, and giving vision at night.'—Theoph. *Simocatta Chron.,* iv. 8, quoted by Gesenius. But it cannot be pretended, that the Spirit of inspiration would use titles in a manner so unmeaning and so pompous as this. Besides, it was one great object of the prophets to vindicate the name and character of the true God, and to show that all such appellations belonged to him alone. However such appellations might be used by surrounding nations, and given to kings and princes by the heathen, yet in the Scriptures they are not given to earthly monarchs. That this passage refers to the Messiah has been generally conceded, except by the Jews, and by a few later critics. Jarchi and Kimchi maintain that it refers to Hezekiah. They have been driven to this by the use which Christians have made of the passage against the Jews. But the absurdity of this interpretation has been shown in the Notes on ch. vii. 14. The *ancient* Jews incontestably referred it to the Messiah. Thus the Targum of Jonathan renders it, '*His name shall be called God of wonderful counsel, man abiding for ever,* THE MESSIAH, מְשִׁיחָא, whose peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days.' Thus Rabbi Jose, of Galilee, says, 'The name of the Messiah is שָׁלוֹם *Shâlôm,* as is said in Isa. ix. 6, "Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace."' Ben Sira (fol. 40, of the Amsterdam Edition, 1679) numbers among the eight names of the Messiah those also taken from this passage, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. The later Jews, however, have rejected this interpretation, because the Messiah is here described as God.

7. *Of the increase,* &c. The word rendered *government* here, הַמִּשְׂרָה, means properly his government *as a prince*—*his principality,* and is a continuation of the idea in the previous verse, 'the Prince of Peace.' It means that his reign as a prince of peace—in extending and promoting peace, shall be unlimited. ¶ *And peace.* This does not signify in the original, as our translation would seem to do, that there should be no end to the increase of his peace, but that there should be no limit to *peace,* that is, that his reign should be one of unlimited peace. The whole is a description of a prosperous, wide-extended, ever-growing and unlimited empire of peace. ¶ *No end.* The word here used—קֵץ—may refer either to space or time. The connection, however, seems to confine it to *time,* and to mean simply that over his wide-extended and peaceful principality he should reign for ever. ¶ *Upon the throne of David;* see Note, Acts ii. 30. This was in accordance with the promise made to David; 1 Kings viii. 25; 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Ps. cxxxii. 11. This promise was understood as referring to the Messiah. The primary idea is, that he should be descended in the line of David, and accordingly the New Testament writers are often at pains to show that the Lord Jesus was of that family; Luke ii. 4. When it is said that he would sit upon the throne of David, it is not to be taken literally. The peculiarity of the reign of David was, *that he reigned over the people of God.* He was chosen for this purpose from humble life; was declared in his administration to be a man after God's own heart; and his long and prosperous reign was a reign over the people of God. To sit upon the throne of David, therefore, means to reign over the people of God; and in this sense the Messiah sat on his throne. There is also a similarity in the two administrations, in the fact that the Messiah was taken from humble life.

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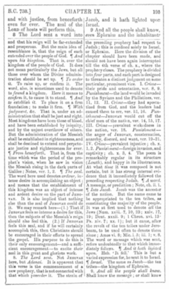

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and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

9 And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim and the inhabitants

and that his reign will be far-extended and prosperous. But the main idea of resemblance is, that the reign of each extended over the people of God. ¶ *And upon his kingdom.* That is, over the kingdom of the people of God. It does not mean particularly the Jews, but all those over whom the Divine administration should be set up. ¶ *To order it.* To raise up, or confirm it. The word, also, is sometimes used to denote to *found* a kingdom. Here it means to *confirm* it, to cause it to stand. ¶ *And to establish it.* To place it on a firm foundation; to make it firm. ¶ *With judgment,* &c. That is, under an administration that shall be just and right. Most kingdoms have been those of blood, and have been established by iniquity, and by the unjust overthrow of others. But the administration of the Messiah shall be established in righteousness, and shall be destined to extend and perpetuate justice and righteousness for ever. ¶ *From henceforth.* That is, from the time which was the period of the prophet's vision, when he saw in vision the Messiah rising in the dark parts of Galilee; Notes, ver. 1, 2. ¶ *The zeal.* The word here used denotes *ardour*, intense desire in accomplishing an object; and means that the establishment of this kingdom was an object of intense and ardent desire on the part of JEHOVAH. It is also implied that nothing else than the zeal of JEHOVAH could do it. We may remark here—(1.) That if JEHOVAH feels so intense a desire for this, then the subjects of the Messiah's reign should also feel this. (2.) If JEHOVAH feels this zeal, and if he will certainly accomplish this, then Christians should be encouraged in their efforts to spread the gospel. His *purpose* to do this is their only *encouragement*—and a sufficient encouragement—to excite *their* zeal in this great and glorious work.

8. *The Lord sent.* Not JEHOVAH here, but *Adonai.* It is apparent that this verse is the commencement of a new prophecy, that is not connected with that which precedes it. The strain of the preceding prophecy had respect to Judah; this is confined solely to Israel, or Ephraim. Here the division of the chapter should have been made, and should not have been again interrupted till the 4th verse of ch. x., where the prophecy closes. The prophecy is divided into *four* parts, and each part is designed to threaten a distinct judgment on some particular, prominent vice. I. *Crime*—their pride and ostentation, ver. 8, 9. *Punishment*—the land would be invaded by the Syrians and the Philistines, ver. 11, 12. II. *Crime*—they had apostatized from God, and the leaders had caused them to err, ver. 13, 16. *Punishment*—JEHOVAH would cut off the chief men of the nation, ver. 14, 15, 17. III. *Crime*—prevalent wickedness in the nation, ver. 18. *Punishment*—the anger of JEHOVAH, consternation, anarchy, discord, and want, ver. 19–21. IV. *Crime*—prevalent injustice; ch. x. 1, 2. *Punishment*—foreign invasion, and captivity; ch. x. 3, 4. The poem is remarkably regular in its structure (*Lowth*), and happy in its illustrations. At what *time* it was composed is not certain, but it has strong internal evidence that it immediately followed the preceding respecting Judah. ¶ *A word.* A message, or prediction; Note, ch. ii. 1. ¶ *Into Jacob.* Jacob was the ancestor of the nation. But the name came to be appropriated to the ten tribes, as constituting the majority of the people. It was at first used to denote *all* the Jews (Num. xxiii. 7, 10, 23; xxiv. 17, 19; Deut. xxxii. 9; 1 Chron. xvi. 13; Ps. xiv. 7; xx. 1); but it came, after the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, to be used often to denote them alone; Amos vi. 8; Mic. i. 5; iii. 1; v. 8. The word or message which was sent, refers undoubtedly to that which immediately follows. ¶ *And it hath lighted upon.* Heb. 'It fell.' This is but a varied expression for, he sent it to Israel. ¶ *Israel.* The same as Jacob—the ten tribes—the kingdom of Ephraim.

9. *And all the people shall know.* Shall know the message; or shall know

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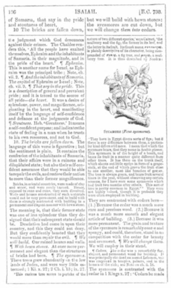

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of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

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.

the judgment which God denounces against their crimes. The Chaldee renders this, 'All the people have exalted themselves, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, in their magnitude, and in the pride of the heart.' ¶ *Ephraim.* This is another name for Israel, as Ephraim was the principal tribe; Note, ch. vii. 2. ¶ *And the inhabitants of Samaria.* The capital of Ephraim or Israel; Note, ch. vii. 9. ¶ *That say in the pride.* This is a description of general and prevalent pride; and it is traced to the source of all pride—*the heart.* It was a desire of splendour, power, and magnificence, originating in the heart, and manifesting itself by the language of self-confidence and defiance at the judgments of God. ¶ *Stoutness.* Heb. 'Greatness.' It means a self-confident purpose; and indicates the state of feeling in a man when he trusts to his own resources, and not to God.

10. *The bricks are fallen down.* The language of this verse is figurative; but the sentiment is plain. It contains the confession of the inhabitants of Samaria, that their affairs were in a ruinous and dilapidated state; but also their self-confident assurance that they would be able to repair the evils, and restore their nation to more than their former magnificence.

Bricks, in oriental countries, were made of clay and straw, and were rarely burned. Hence, exposed to suns and rains, they soon dissolved. Walls and houses constructed of such materials would not be very permanent, and to build with them is strongly contrasted with building in a permanent and elegant manner with hewn stone.

The meaning is, that their former state was one of less splendour than they designed that their subsequent state should be. Desolation had come in upon their country, and this they could not deny. But they confidently boasted that they would more than repair the evil. ¶ *We will build.* Our ruined houses and walls. ¶ *With hewn stones.* At once more permanent and elegant than the structures of bricks had been. ¶ *The sycamores.* These trees grew abundantly on the low lands of Judea, and were very little esteemed; 1 Ki. x. 27; 2 Ch. i. 15; ix. 27.

'This curious tree seems to partake of the nature of two different species,' says Calmet, 'the mulberry and the fig; the former in its leaf, and the latter in its fruit. Its Greek name, συκομορος, is plainly descriptive of its character, being compounded of συκος, a fig tree, and μορος, a mulberry tree. It is thus described by Norden:

SYCAMORE (*Ficus sycomorus*).

'They have in Egypt divers sorts of figs; but if there is any difference between them, a particular kind differs still more. I mean that which the sycamore bears, that they name in Arabic *giomez*. This sycamore is of the height of a beech, and bears its fruit in a manner quite different from other trees. It has them on the trunk itself, which shoots out little sprigs in form of a grape-stalk, at the end of which grows the fruit close to one another, most like bunches of grapes. The tree is always green, and bears fruit several times in the year, without observing any certain seasons, for I have seen some sycamores which had fruit two months after others. This sort of tree is pretty common in Egypt.'' They were not highly valued, though it is probable they were often employed in building.

They are contrasted with cedars here—(1.) Because the cedar was a much more rare and precious wood. (2.) Because it was a much more smooth and elegant article of building. (3.) Because it was more permanent. The grain and texture of the sycamore is remarkably coarse and spongy, and could, therefore, stand in no competition with the cedar for beauty and ornament. ¶ *We will change them.* We will employ in their stead.

¶ *Cedars.* The cedar was a remarkably fine, elegant, and permanent wood for building. It was principally obtained on mount Lebanon, and was employed in temples, palaces, and in the houses of the rich; see Note on ch. ii. 13.

The sycamore is contrasted with the cedar in 1 Kings x. 27: 'Cedars he made

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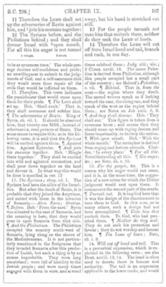

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER IX. 197

11 Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and [1]join his enemies together:

12 The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with [2]open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.

14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

[1] mingle. [2] whole.

to be as sycamore trees.' The whole passage denotes self-confidence and pride; an unwillingness to submit to the judgments of God, and a self-assurance that they would more than repair all the evils that would be inflicted on them.

11. *Therefore.* This verse indicates the *punishment* that would come upon them for their pride. ¶ *The LORD shall set up.* Heb. 'Shall exalt.' That is, they shall overcome and subdue him. ¶ *The adversaries of Rezin.* King of Syria, ch. vii. 1. It should be observed here, that twenty-one MSS., instead of *adversaries*, read *princes* of Rezin. The sense seems to require this; as in the following verse, it is said that the *Syrians* will be excited against them. ¶ *Against him.* Against Ephraim. ¶ *And join his enemies together.* Heb. 'Mingle them together.' They shall be excited into wild and agitated commotion, and shall pour down together on the land and devour it. In what way this would be done is specified in ver. 12

12. *The Syrians;* chap. vii. 1. The Syrians had been the allies of the Israelites. But after the death of Rezin, it is probable that they joined the Assyrians, and united with them in the invasion of Samaria.—*Aben Ezra; Grotius.* ¶ *Before.* Heb. 'From the east.' Syria was situated to the east of Samaria, and the meaning is here, that they would pour in upon Samaria from that side. ¶ *And the Philistines.* The Philistines occupied the country south-west of Samaria, lying along on the shores of the Mediterranean. It is not particularly mentioned in the Scriptures that they invaded Samaria after this prediction of Isaiah, but such a thing is by no means improbable. They were long unsubdued; were full of hostility to the Jewish people; and were many times engaged with them in wars, and several times subdued them; Judg. xiii.; xiv.; 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. The name Palestine is derived from Philistine, although this people occupied but a small part of the country; *see* Reland's *Palestine*, c. vii. ¶ *Behind.* That is, from *the west*—the region where they dwelt. The sacred writers speak as if looking toward the east, the rising sun, and they speak of the west as the region behind them; see Notes on Job xxiii. 8, 9. ¶ *And they shall devour.* Heb. 'They shall eat.' This figure is taken from a ravenous beast; and means that they should come up with raging desires, and fierce impetuosity, to destroy the nation. ¶ *With open mouth.* Heb. 'With the whole mouth.' The metaphor is derived from raging and furious animals. Chaldee, 'In every place.' ¶ *For all this.* Notwithstanding all this. ¶ *His anger,* &c.; see Note, ch. v. 25.

13. *For the people,* &c. This is a reason why his anger would not cease, and it is, at the same time, the suggestion of a new crime for which the Divine judgment would rest upon them. It commences the second part of the oracle. ¶ *Turneth not.* It is *implied* here that it was the design of the chastisement to turn them to God. In this case, as in many others, such a design had not been accomplished. ¶ *Unto him that smiteth them.* To God, who had punished them. ¶ *Neither do they seek.* They do not seek his protection and favour; they do not worship and honour him. ¶ *The LORD of hosts;* Note, ch. i. 9.

14. *Will cut off head and tail.* This is a proverbial expression, which is explained in the following verse; see also Deut. xxviii. 13, 14. The head is often used to denote those in honour and authority. The tail is an expression applicable to the lower ranks, and would

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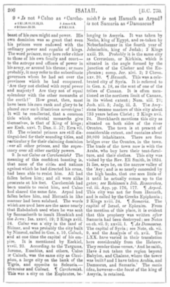

206 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

9 [a] *Is* not [b] Calno as [c] Carchemish? *is* not Hamath as Arpad? *is* not Samaria as [d] Damascus?

a 2 Ki. 18.33, 19.12, 13. b Amos 6.2.
c 2 Chron. 35.20. d 2 Ki. 16.9.

boast of his own might and power. His own dominion was so great that even his princes were endowed with the ordinary power and *regalia* of kings. The word *princes*, may here refer either to those of his own family and court—to the *satraps* and officers of power in his army, or around his throne; or more probably, it may refer to the subordinate governors whom he had set over the provinces which he had conquered. 'Are they not clothed with royal power and majesty? Are they not of equal splendour with the other monarchs of the earth?' How great, then, must have been his own rank and glory to be placed *over* such illustrious sovereigns! It will be recollected, that a common title which oriental monarchs give themselves, is that of King of kings; see Ezek. xxvi. 7; Dan. ii. 37; Ezra vii. 12. The oriental princes are still distinguished for their sounding titles, and particularly for their claiming dominion over all other princes, and the supremacy over all other earthly powers.

9. Is not *Calno as Carchemish?* The meaning of this confident boasting is, that none of the cities and nations against which he had directed his arms, had been able to resist him. All had fallen before him; and all were alike prostrate at his feet. Carchemish had been unable to resist him, and Calno had shared the same fate. Arpad had fallen before him, and Hamath in like manner had been subdued. The words which are used here are the same nearly that Rabshakeh used when he was sent by Sennacherib to insult Hezekiah and the Jews; Isa. xxxvi. 19; 2 Kings xviii. 34. *Calno* was a city in the land of Shinar, and was probably the city built by Nimrod, called in Gen. x. 10, *Calneh*, and at one time the capital of his empire. It is mentioned by Ezekiel, xxvii. 23. According to the Targums, Jerome, Eusebius, and others, Calno or Calneh, was the same city as *Ctesiphon*, a large city on the bank of the Tigris, and opposite to Seleucia.—*Gesenius* and *Calmet*. ¶ *Carchemish.* This was a city on the Euphrates, belonging to Assyria. It was taken by Necho, king of Egypt, and re-taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiachin, king of Judah; 2 Kings xxiii. 29. Probably it is the same city as Cercusium, or Kirkisia, which is situated in the angle formed by the junction of the Chebar and the Euphrates; comp. Jer. xlvi. 2; 2 Chron. xxv. 20. ¶ *Hamath.* This was a celebrated city of Syria. It is referred to in Gen. x. 18, as the seat of one of the tribes of Canaan. It is often mentioned as the northern limit of Canaan, in its widest extent; Num. xiii. 21; Josh. xiii. 5; Judg. iii. 3. The Assyrians became masters of this city about 753 years before Christ; 2 Kings xvii. 24. Burckhardt mentions this city as situated on both sides of the river Orontes. The town is at present of considerable extent, and contains about 30,000 inhabitants. There are four bridges over the Orontes, in the town. The trade of the town now is with the Arabs, who buy here their tent-furniture, and their clothes. This city was visited by the Rev. Eli Smith, in 1834. It lies, says he, on the narrow valley of the 'Asy; and is so nearly concealed by the high banks, that one sees little of it until he actually comes up to the gates; *see* Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. iii. App. pp. 176, 177. ¶ *Arpad.* This city was not far from Hamath, and is called by the Greeks Epiphania; 2 Kings xviii. 34. ¶ *Samaria.* The capital of Israel, or Ephraim. From the mention of this place, it is evident that this prophecy was written *after* Samaria had been destroyed; see Notes on ch. vii. 9; xxviii. 1. ¶ *As Damascus.* The capital of Syria; see Note, ch. vii. 9, and the Analysis of ch. xvii. The LXX. have varied in their translation here considerably from the Hebrew. They render these verses, 'And he saith, Have I not taken the region beyond Babylon, and Chalane, where the tower was built? and I have taken Arabia, and Damascus, and Samaria.' The main *idea*, however—the *boast* of the king of Assyria, is retained.

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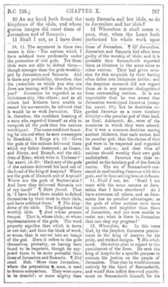

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER X. 207

10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;

11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that*, when the LORD hath performed his whole work upon

10, 11. The argument in these two verses is this: 'The nations which I have subdued were professedly under the protection of idol gods. Yet those idols were not able to defend them—though stronger than the gods worshipped by Jerusalem and Samaria. And is there any probability, therefore, that the protection on which you who are Jews are leaning, will be able to deliver you?' Jerusalem he regarded as an idolatrous city, like others; and as all others had hitherto been unable to retard his movements, he inferred that it would be so with Jerusalem. This is, therefore, the confident boasting of a man who regarded himself as able to vanquish all *the gods* that the nations worshipped. The same confident boasting he uttered when he sent messengers to Hezekiah; 2 Kings xix. 12: 'Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my father destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Thelasar?' Isa. xxxvi. 18–20: 'Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?' ¶ *Hath found.* That is, 'I have found them unable to defend themselves by their trust in their idols, and have subdued them.' ¶ *The kingdoms of the idols.* The kingdoms that worship idols. ¶ *And whose graven images.* That is, whose idols; or whose representations of the gods. The word properly signifies that which is hewn or cut out; and then the block of wood, or stone, that is carved into an image of the god. Here it refers to the gods themselves, probably, as having been found to be impotent, though he supposed them to be more powerful than those of Jerusalem and Samaria. ¶ *Did excel.* Heb. 'More than Jerusalem,' where the preposition מ, *mem*, is used to denote comparison. They were *more* to be dreaded; or more mighty than those of Jerusalem. ¶ *Of Jerusalem.* Jerusalem and Samaria had often been guilty of the worship of idols; and it is probable that Sennacherib regarded them as idolaters in the same sense as other nations. They had given occasion for this suspicion by their having often fallen into idolatrous habits; and the Assyrian monarch did not regard them as in any manner distinguished from surrounding nations. It is not improbable that he was aware that Jerusalem worshipped JEHOVAH (comp. Isa. xxxvi. 20); but he doubtless regarded JEHOVAH as a mere tutelary divinity—the peculiar god of that land, as Baal, Ashtaroth, &c., were of the countries in which they were adored. For it was a common doctrine among ancient idolaters, that each nation had its peculiar god; that the claims of that god were to be respected and regarded in that nation; and that thus all nations should worship their own gods undisturbed. JEHOVAH was thus regarded as the tutelary god of the Jewish nation. The sin of Sennacherib consisted in confounding JEHOVAH with false gods, and in then setting him at defiance.

11. *Shall I not, &c.* 'Shall I not meet with the same success at Jerusalem that I have elsewhere? As I have overcome all others, and as Jerusalem has no peculiar advantages; as the gods of other nations were more in number, and mightier than those of Jerusalem, and yet were unable to resist me; what is there in Jerusalem that can stay my progress?'

12. *Wherefore, &c.* In this verse God, by the prophet, threatens punishment to the king of Assyria for his pride, and wicked designs. ¶ *His whole work.* His entire plan in regard to the punishment of the Jews. He sent the king of Assyria for a specific purpose to execute his justice on the people of Jerusalem. That plan he would execute *entirely* by the hand of Sennacherib, and would *then* inflict deserved punishment on Sennacherib himself, for his

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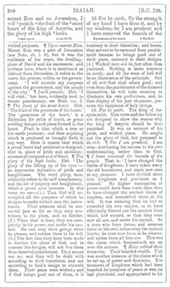

208 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will [1] punish [a] the fruit of the [2] stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high [b] looks.

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

1 visit upon. a Jer. 50.18. 2 *greatness of the heart.* b Ps. 18.27.

wicked purposes. ¶ *Upon mount Zion.* Mount Zion was a part of Jerusalem (see Note, ch. i. 8), but it was the residence of the court, the dwelling-place of David and his successors; and perhaps here, where it is mentioned as distinct from Jerusalem, it refers to the court, the princes, nobles, or the government. 'I will execute my purposes against the government, and the people of the city.' ¶ *I will punish.* Heb. 'I will visit;' but here, evidently used to denote punishment; see Note, ver. 3. ¶ *The fruit of the stout heart.* Heb. 'The fruit of the greatness of the heart.' The 'greatness of the heart,' is a Hebraism for pride of heart, or great swelling designs and plans formed in the heart. *Fruit* is that which a tree or the earth produces; and then anything which is produced or brought forth in any way. Here it means that which a proud heart had produced or designed, that is, plans of pride and ambition; schemes of conquest and of blood. ¶ *The glory of his high looks.* Heb. 'The glory of the lifting up of his eyes'—an expression indicative of pride and haughtiness. The word *glory*, here, evidently refers to the self-complacency, and the air of majesty and haughtiness, which a proud man assumes. In this verse we see—(1.) That God will accomplish all the purposes of which he designs to make wicked men the instruments. *Their* schemes shall be successful just so far as they may contribute to *his* plans, and no farther. (2.) When that is done, they are completely in *his* power, and under his control. He can stay their goings when he pleases, and subdue them to his will. (3.) The fact that they have been made to further the plans of God, and to execute his designs, will not free them from deserved punishment. They meant not so; and they will be dealt with according to *their* intentions, and not according to God's design to overrule them. *Their* plans were wicked; and if God brings good out of them, it is contrary to *their* intention; and hence, they are not to be screened from punishment because he brings good out of their plans, contrary to their designs. (4.) Wicked men *are in fact* often thus punished. Nothing is more common on earth; and all the woes of hell will be an illustration of the principle. Out of all evil God shall educe good; and even from the punishment of the damned themselves, he will take occasion to illustrate his own perfections, and, in that display of his just character, promote the happiness of holy beings.

13. *For he saith.* The king of Assyria saith. This verse and the following are designed to show the reason why the king of Assyria should be thus punished. It was on account of his pride, and wicked plans. He sought not the glory of God, but purposed to do evil. ¶ *For I am prudent.* I am wise; attributing his success to his own understanding, rather than to God. ¶ *I have removed the bounds of the people.* That is, 'I have changed the limits of kingdoms; I have taken away the old boundaries, and made new ones at my pleasure. I have divided them into kingdoms and provinces as I pleased.' No higher assumption of power could have been made than thus to have changed the ancient limits of empires, and remodelled them at his will. It was claiming that he had so extended his own empire, as to have effectually blotted out the ancient lines which had existed, so that they were now all one, and under his control. So a man who buys farms, and annexes them to his own, takes away the ancient limits; he runs new lines as he pleases, and unites them all into one. This was the claim which Sennacherib set up over the nations. ¶ *Have robbed their treasures.* Their hoarded wealth. This was another instance of the claim which he set up, of power and dominion. The treasures of kingdoms which had been hoarded for purposes of peace or war, he had plundered, and appropriated to his

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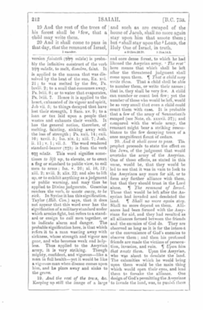

212 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

19 And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be [1] few, that a child may write them.

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 [a] shall stay upon the [b] LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

[1] number. [a] 2 Chron. 28.20. [b] Hos. 14.3.

version *fainteth* ([illegible] *msisēs*) is probably the infinitive construct of the verb [illegible] *māsās*, to melt, dissolve, faint. It is applied to the manna that was dissolved by the heat of the sun, Ex. xvi. 21; to wax melted by the fire, Ps. lxviii. 2; to a snail that consumes away, Ps. lviii. 8; or to water that evaporates, Ps. lviii. 7. Hence it is applied to the heart, exhausted of its vigour and spirit, Job vii. 5; to things decayed that have lost their strength, 1 Sam. xv. 9; to a loan or tax laid upon a people that wastes and exhausts their wealth. It has the general notion, therefore, of melting, fainting, sinking away with the loss of strength; Ps. xxii. 14; cxii. 10; xcvii. 5; Isa. xix. 1; xiii. 7; Josh. ii. 11; v. 1; vii. 5. The word rendered standard-bearer ([illegible]) is from the verb [illegible] *nāsās*. This word signifies sometimes *to lift up*, to elevate, or to erect a flag or standard to public view, to call men to arms; Isa. v. 26; xi. 10, 12; xiii. 2; xviii. 3; xlix. 22; and also to lift up, or to exhibit anything as a judgment or public warning, and may thus be applied to Divine judgments. Gesenius renders the verb, *to waste away, to be sick*. In Syriac it has this signification. Taylor (*Heb. Con.*) says, that it does not appear that this word ever has the signification of a military standard under which armies fight, but refers to a standard or ensign to *call* men together, or to indicate alarm and danger. The probable signification here, is that which refers it to a man wasting away with sickness, whose strength and vigour are gone, and who becomes weak and helpless. Thus applied to the Assyrian army, it is very striking. Though mighty, confident, and vigorous—like a man in full health—yet it would be like a vigorous man when disease comes upon him, and he pines away and sinks to the grave.

19. *And the rest of the trees*, &c. Keeping up still the *image* of a large and once dense forest, to which he had likened the Assyrian army. '*The rest*' here means that which shall be left after the threatened judgment shall come upon them. ¶ *That a child may write them.* That a child shall be able to number them, or write their names; that is, they shall be very few. A child can number or count but few; yet the number of those who would be left, would be so very small that even a child could count them with ease. It is probable that a few of the army of Sennacherib escaped (see Note, ch. xxxvii. 37); and compared with the whole army, the remnant might bear a striking resemblance to the few decaying trees of a once magnificent forest of cedars.

20. *And it shall come to pass.* The prophet proceeds to state the effect on the *Jews*, of the judgment that would overtake the army of the Assyrian. One of those effects, as stated in this verse, would be, that they would be led to see that it was in vain to look to the Assyrians any more for aid, or to form any further alliance with them, but that they should trust in the Lord alone. ¶ *The remnant of Israel.* Those that would be left after the Assyrian had invaded and desolated the land. ¶ *Shall no more again stay.* Shall no more depend on them. Alliances had been formed with the Assyrians for aid, and they had resulted as all alliances formed between the friends and the enemies of God do. They are observed as long as it is for the interest or the convenience of God's enemies to observe them; and then his professed friends are made the victims of persecution, invasion, and ruin. ¶ *Upon him that smote them.* Upon the Assyrian, who was about to desolate the land. The calamities which he would bring upon them would be the main thing which would open their eyes, and lead them to forsake the alliance. One design of God's permitting the Assyrians to invade the land, was, to punish them

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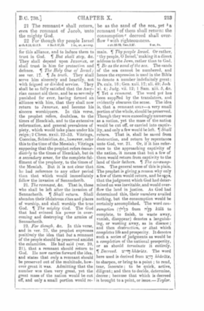

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER X. 213

21 The remnant [a] shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* [b] a remnant [1] of them shall return: the consumption [c] decreed shall overflow [2] with righteousness.

[a] ch. 6.13; 65.8, 9. [b] Ro. 9. 27, 28. [1] in, or, among. [c] ch. 28.22; Dan. 9.27. [2] or, in.

for this alliance, and to induce them to trust in God. ¶ *But shall stay*, &c. They shall depend upon JEHOVAH, or shall trust in him for protection and defence. ¶ *The Holy One of Israel*; see ver. 17. ¶ *In truth.* They shall serve him sincerely and heartily, not with feigned or divided service. They shall be so fully satisfied that the Assyrian cannot aid them, and be so severely punished for ever, having formed an alliance with him, that they shall now return to JEHOVAH, and become his sincere worshippers. In this verse, the prophet refers, doubtless, to the times of Hezekiah, and to the extensive reformation, and general prevalence of piety, which would take place under his reign; 2 Chron. xxxii. 22–33. Vitringa, Coccejus, Schmidius, &c., however, refer this to the time of the Messiah; Vitringa supposing that the prophet refers *immediately* to the times of Hezekiah, but *in a secondary sense*, for the complete fulfilment of the prophecy, to the times of the Messiah. But it is not clear that he had reference to any other period than that which would immediately follow the invasion of Sennacherib.

21. *The remnant*, &c. That is, those who shall be left after the invasion of Sennacherib. ¶ *Shall return.* Shall abandon their idolatrous rites and places of worship, and shall worship the true God. ¶ *The mighty God.* The God that had evinced his power in overcoming and destroying the armies of Sennacherib.

22. *For though*, &c. In this verse, and in ver. 23, the prophet expresses positively the idea that *but* a remnant of the people should be preserved amidst the calamities. He had said (ver. 20, 21), that a remnant should return to God. He now carries forward the idea, and states that *only* a remnant should be preserved out of the multitude, however great it was. Admitting that the number was then very great, yet the great mass of the nation would be cut off, and only a small portion would remain. ¶ *Thy people Israel.* Or rather, 'thy people, O Israel,' making it a direct address to the *Jews*, rather than to God. ¶ *Be as the sand of the sea.* The sands of the sea cannot be numbered, and hence the expression is used in the Bible to denote a *number* indefinitely great; Ps. cxix. 18; Gen. xxii. 17; xli. 49; Josh. xi. 4; Judg. vii. 12; 1 Sam. xiii. 5, &c. ¶ Yet *a remnant.* The word *yet* has been supplied by the translators, and evidently obscures the sense. The idea is, that a remnant ONLY—a very small portion of the whole, should be preserved. Though they were exceedingly numerous as a nation, yet the mass of the nation would be cut off, or carried into captivity, and only a few would be left. ¶ *Shall return.* That is, shall be saved from destruction, and return by repentance unto God, ver. 21. Or, if it has reference to the approaching captivity of the nation, it means that but a few of them would return from captivity to the land of their fathers. ¶ *The consumption.* The general sense of this is plain. The prophet is giving a reason why only a few of them would return, and he says, that the judgment which God had determined on was inevitable, and would overflow the land in justice. As God had determined this, their *numbers* availed nothing, but the consumption would be certainly accomplished. The word *consumption* ([illegible] from [illegible] *kālâ* to complete, to finish, to waste away, vanish, disappear) denotes a languishing, or wasting away, as in disease; and then *destruction*, or that which *completes* life and prosperity. It denotes such a *series* of judgments as would be a *completion* of the national prosperity, or as should *terminate* it entirely. ¶ *Decreed.* [illegible] *khârûtz.* The word here used is derived from [illegible] *khârûtz*, to sharpen, or bring to a point; to rend, tear, lacerate; to be quick, active, diligent; and then to decide, determine, decree; because that which is decreed is brought to a point, or issue.—*Taylor.*

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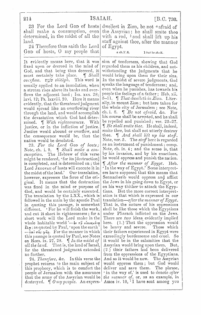

214 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not [a] afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, [1] and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

[a] ch. 37.6. [1] but he shall.

It evidently means here, that it was fixed upon or decreed in the mind of God, and that being thus decreed, it must certainly take place. ¶ *Shall overflow.* [illegible] *shôtēph.* This word is usually applied to an inundation, when a stream rises above its banks and overflows the adjacent land; Isa. xxx. 28; lxvi. 12; Ps. lxxviii. 20. Here it means evidently, that the threatened judgment would spread like an overflowing river through the land, and would accomplish the devastation which God had determined. ¶ *With righteousness.* With justice, or in the infliction of justice. Justice would abound or overflow, and the consequence would be, that the nation would be desolated.

23. *For the Lord GOD of hosts*; Note, ch. i. 9. ¶ *Shall make a consumption.* The Hebrew of this verse might be rendered, 'for its [destruction] is completed, and is determined on; the Lord JEHOVAH of hosts will execute it in the midst of the land.' Our translation, however, expresses the force of the original. It means that the destruction was fixed in the mind or purpose of God, and would be certainly executed. The translation by the LXX., which is followed in the main by the apostle Paul in quoting this passage, is somewhat different. 'For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; for a short work will the Lord make in the whole habitable world'—[illegible]; as quoted by Paul, 'upon the earth'—[illegible]. For the manner in which this passage is quoted by Paul, see Notes on Rom. ix. 27, 28. ¶ *In the midst of all the land.* That is, the land of Israel, for the threatened judgment extended no further.

24. *Therefore*, &c. In this verse the prophet returns to the main subject of this prophecy, which is to comfort the people of Jerusalem with the assurance that the army of the Assyrian would be destroyed. ¶ *O my people.* An expression of tenderness, shewing that God regarded them as his children, and notwithstanding the judgments that he would bring upon them for their sins. In the midst of severe judgments, God speaks the language of tenderness; and, even when he punishes, has towards his people the feelings of a father; Heb. xii. 5–11. ¶ *That dwelleth in Zion.* Literally, in mount Zion; but here taken for the whole city of Jerusalem; see Note, ch. i. 8. ¶ *Be not afraid*, &c. For his course shall be arrested, and he shall be repelled and punished; ver. 25–27. ¶ *He shall smite thee.* He shall, indeed, smite thee, but shall not utterly destroy thee. ¶ *And shall lift up his staff.* Note, ver. 5. The *staff* here is regarded as an instrument of punishment; comp. Note, ch. ix. 4; and the sense is, that by his invasion, and by his exactions, he would oppress and punish the nation. ¶ *After the manner of Egypt.* Heb. 'In the way of Egypt.' Some interpreters have supposed that this means that Sennacherib would oppress and afflict the Jews in his going down to Egypt, or on his way thither to attack the Egyptians. But the more correct interpretation is that which is expressed in our translation—*after the manner of Egypt*. That is, the nature of his oppressions shall be like those which the Egyptians under Pharaoh inflicted on the Jews. There are *two* ideas evidently implied here. (1.) That the oppression would be heavy and severe. Those which their fathers experienced in Egypt were exceedingly burdensome and cruel. So it would be in the calamities that the Assyrian would bring upon them. But, (2.) their fathers had been delivered from the oppressions of the Egyptians. And so it would be now. The Assyrian would oppress them; but God would deliver and save them. The phrase, 'in the way of,' is used to denote *after the manner of*, or, as an example, in Amos iv. 10, 'I have sent among you

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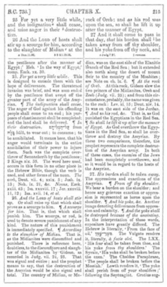

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER X. 215

25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation[a] shall cease, and mine anger in their [b] destruction.

26 And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian[c] at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall [1] be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and

a Dan.11.36. b 2 Ki.19.35. c Judg.7.25. 1 remove.

the pestilence after the manner of Egypt;' Heb. 'In the way of Egypt;' comp. Ezek. xx. 30.

25. *For yet a very little while.* This is designed to console them with the hope of deliverance. The threatened invasion was brief, and was soon ended by the pestilence that swept off the greater part of the army of the Assyrian. ¶ *The indignation shall cease.* The anger of God against his offending people shall come to an end; his purposes of chastisement shall be completed; and the land shall be delivered. ¶ *In their destruction.* עַל־תַּבְלִיתָם from בָּלָה *bâlâ*, to wear out; to consume; to be annihilated. It means here, that his anger would terminate in the entire annihilation of their power to injure them. Such was the complete overthrow of Sennacherib by the pestilence; 2 Kings xix. 35. The word here used, occurs in this form in no other place in the Hebrew Bible, though the verb is used, and other forms of the noun. *The verb*, Deut. vii. 4; xxix. 5; Josh. ix. 13; Neh. ix. 21, &c. *Nouns*, Ezek. xxiii. 43; Isa. xxxviii. 17; Jer. xxxviii. 11, 12; Isa. xvii. 14, *et al.*

26. *And the LORD of hosts shall stir up.* Or shall raise up that which shall prove as a scourge to him. ¶ *A scourge for him.* That is, that which shall punish him. The scourge, or rod, is used to denote severe punishment of any kind. The nature of this punishment is immediately specified. ¶ *According to the slaughter of Midian.* That is, as the Midianites were discomfited and punished. There is reference here, doubtless, to the discomfiture and slaughter of the Midianites by Gideon, as recorded in Judg. vii. 24, 25. That was signal and entire; and the prophet means to say, that the destruction of the Assyrian would be also signal and total. The country of Midian, or Midian, was on the east side of the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea; but it extended also north along the desert of mount Seir to the country of the Moabites; see Note on ch. ix. 6. ¶ *At the rock of Oreb.* At this rock, Gideon slew the two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. vii. 25); and from this circumstance, probably, the name was given to the rock: Lev. xi. 15; Deut. xiv. 14. It was on the east side of the Jordan. ¶ *And as his rod, &c.* That is, as God punished the Egyptians in the Red Sea. ¶ *So shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.* As God overthrew the Egyptians in the Red Sea, so shall he overthrow and destroy the Assyrian. By these two comparisons, therefore, the prophet represents the complete destruction of the Assyrian army. In both of these cases, the enemies of the Jews had been completely overthrown, and so it would be in regard to the hosts of the Assyrian.

27. *His burden shall be taken away.* The oppressions and exactions of the Assyrian. ¶ *From off thy shoulder.* We bear a burden on the shoulder; and hence any grievous exaction or oppression is represented as borne upon the shoulder. ¶ *And his yoke, &c.* Another image denoting deliverance from oppression and calamity. ¶ *And the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.* In the interpretation of these words, expositors have greatly differed. The Hebrew is literally, 'From the face of oil,' מִפְּנֵי־שָׁמֶן. The Vulgate renders it, literally, *à facie olei.* The LXX. 'His fear shall be taken from thee, and his yoke *from thy shoulders.*' The Syriac, 'His yoke shall be broken before the oxen.' The Chaldee Paraphrase, 'The people shall be broken before the Messiah.' Lowth renders it, 'The yoke shall perish from off your shoulders;' following the Septuagint. Grotius sug-

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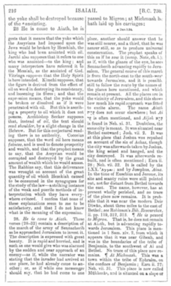

216 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

the yoke shall be destroyed because of the [a] anointing.

28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

a Dan.9.24.

gests that it means that the yoke which the Assyrians had imposed upon the Jews would be broken by Hezekiah, the king who had been anointed with oil. Jarchi also supposes that it refers to one who was anointed—to the king; and many interpreters have referred it to the Messiah, as the anointed of God. Vitringa supposes that the Holy Spirit is here intended. Kimchi supposes, that the figure is derived from the effect of oil on wood in destroying its consistency, and loosening its fibres; and that the expression means, that the yoke would be broken or dissolved as if it were penetrated with oil. But this is ascribing a property to oil which it does not possess. Archbishop Secker supposes that, instead of *oil*, the text should read *shoulder*, by a slight change in the Hebrew. But for this conjectural reading there is no authority. Cocceius supposes, that the word *oil* here means *fatness*, and is used to denote prosperity and wealth, and that the prophet means to say, that the Assyrian would be corrupted and destroyed by the great amount of wealth which he would amass. The Rabbins say, that this deliverance was wrought on account of the great quantity of oil which Hezekiah caused to be consumed in the synagogues for the study of the law—a striking instance of the weak and puerile methods of interpretation which they have everywhere evinced. I confess that none of these explanations seem to me to be satisfactory, and that I do not know what is the meaning of the expression.

28. *He is come to Aiath.* These verses (28–32) contain a description of the march of the army of Sennacherib as he approached Jerusalem to invest it. The description is expressed with great beauty. It is rapid and hurried, and is such as one would give who was alarmed by the sudden and near approach of an enemy—as if, while the narrator was stating that the invader had arrived at one place, he had already come to another; or, as if while one messenger should say, that he had come to one place, another should answer that he was still nearer, and a third, that he was nearer still, so as to produce universal consternation. The prophet speaks of this as if he *saw* it (comp. Note, ch. i.); as if, with the glance of the eye, he sees Sennacherib advancing rapidly to Jerusalem. The general course of this march is from the north-east to the south-west towards *Jerusalem*, and it is possible still to follow the route by the names of the places here mentioned, and which remain at present. All the places are in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and this shows how much his rapid approach was fitted to excite alarm. The name *Aiath* עַיַּת does not occur elsewhere; but *Ai* עַי is often mentioned, and *Aijah* עַיָּא is found in Neh. xi. 31. Doubtless, the same city is meant. It was situated near Bethel eastward; Josh. vii. 2. It was at this place that Joshua was repulsed on account of the sin of Achan, though the city was afterwards taken by Joshua, the king seized and hanged, and the city destroyed. It was afterwards rebuilt, and is often mentioned; Ezra ii. 28; Neh. vii. 32. It is called by the LXX. Ἀγγαι; and by Josephus, *Aina*. In the time of Eusebius and Jerome, its site and scanty ruins were still pointed out, not far distant from Bethel towards the east. The name, however, has at present wholly perished, and no trace of the place now remains. It is probable that it was near the modern Deir Diwân, about three miles to the east of Bethel; *see* Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, ii. pp. 119, 312, 313. ¶ *He is passed to Migron.* That is, he does not remain at Aiath, but is advancing rapidly towards Jerusalem. This place is mentioned in 1 Sam. xiv. 2, from which it appears that it was near Gibeah, and was in the boundaries of the tribe of Benjamin, to the southwest of Ai and Bethel. No trace of this place now remains. ¶ *At Michmash.* This was a town within the tribe of Ephraim, on the confines of Benjamin; Ezra ii. 27; Neh. vii. 31. This place is now called Mŭkhmâs, and is situated on a slope or

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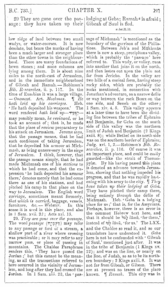

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER X. 217

29 They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah[a] is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

a Jer.31.15.

low ridge of land between two small wadys, or water-courses. It is now desolate, but bears the marks of having been a much larger and stronger place than the other towns in the neighbourhood. There are many foundations of hewn stones; and some columns are lying among them. It is about nine miles to the north-east of Jerusalem, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Gibeah and Ramah.—Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, ii. p. 117. In the time of Eusebius it was a large village. —*Onomast.* Art. *Machmas.* ¶ *He hath laid up his carriages.* Heb. 'He hath deposited his weapons.' The word rendered *hath laid up*—יַפְקִיד—may possibly mean, *he reviewed*, or he took an account of; that is, he made that the *place of review* preparatory to his attack on Jerusalem. Jerome says, that the passage means, that he had such confidence of taking Jerusalem, that he deposited his armour at Michmash, as being unnecessary in the siege of Jerusalem. I think, however, that the passage means simply, that he had made Michmash one of his *stations* to which he had come, and that the expression 'he hath deposited his armour there,' denotes merely that he had come there as one of his stations, and had pitched his camp in that place on the way to Jerusalem. The English word *carriage*, sometimes meant formerly, *that which is carried*, baggage, vessels, furniture, &c.—*Webster.* In this sense it is used in this place, and also in 1 Sam. xvii. 22; Acts xxi. 15.

29. *They are gone over the passage.* The word *passage* (מַעְבָּרָה) may refer to any passage or ford of a stream, a shallow part of a river where crossing was practicable; or it may refer to any narrow pass, or place of passing in mountains. The Chaldee Paraphrase renders this, 'They have passed the Jordan;' but this cannot be the meaning, as all the transactions referred to here occurred in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and long after they had crossed the Jordan. In 1 Sam. xiii. 23, the 'passage of Michmash' is mentioned as the boundary of the garrison of the Philistines. Between Jeb'a and Mŭkhmâs there is now a steep, precipitous valley, which is probably the 'passage' here referred to. This wady, or valley, runs into another that joins it on the north, and then issues out upon the plain not far from Jericho. In the valley are two hills of a conical form, having steep rocky sides, which are probably the rocks mentioned, in connection with Jonathan's adventure, as a narrow defile or way between the rock Bozez on the one side, and Seneh on the other; 1 Sam. xiv. 4, 5. This valley appears at a later time to have been the dividing line between the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, for Geba on the south side of this valley was the northern limit of Judah and Benjamin (2 Kings xxiii. 8); while Bethel on its north side was on the southern border of Ephraim; Judg. xvi. 1, 2.—Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, ii. p. 116. Of course it was an important place, and could be easily guarded—like the strait of Thermopylæ. By his having passed this place is denoted an advance towards Jerusalem, showing that nothing impeded his progress, and that he was rapidly hastening with his army to the city. ¶ *They have taken up their lodging at Geba.* They have pitched their camp there, being entirely through the defile of Michmash. Heb. 'Geba is a lodging place for us;' that is, for the Assyrians. Perhaps, however, there is an error in the common Hebrew text here, and that it should be לָמוֹ *lâmô*, 'for them,' instead of לָנוּ *lânû*, 'for us.' The LXX. and the Chaldee so read it, and so our translators have understood it. *Geba* here is not be confounded with 'Gibeah of Saul,' mentioned just after. It was in the tribe of Benjamin (1 Kings xv. 22); and was on the line, or nearly on the line, of Judah, so as to be its northern boundary; 2 Kings xxiii. 8. It was not far from Gibeah, or Gibeon. There are at present no traces of the place known. ¶ *Ramah.* This city was in

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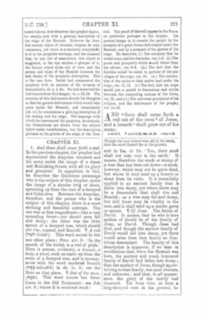

B.C. 738.] CHAPTER XI. 221

hence follows, that wherever the prophet *begins*, he usually *ends* with a glowing description of the reign of the Messiah. However far from this central *object* of revealed religion he may commence, yet there is a tendency everywhere *to it* in the prophetic writings; and the moment that, by any law of association, this object is suggested, or the eye catches a glimpse of it, the former object sinks out of view, and the person and reign of the Messiah becomes the sole theme of the prophetic description. This is the case here. Isaiah had commenced the prophecy with an account of the invasion of Sennacherib; ch. x. 5, &c. He had described the deliverance from that danger; ch. x. 33, 34. The mention of this deliverance directs his thoughts to that far greater deliverance which would take place under the Messiah; and immediately (ch. xi.) he commences a glowing description of his coming and his reign. The *language* with which he commenced the prophecy, is retained; the illustrations are drawn from the subject *before* under consideration; but the description pertains to the glories of the reign of the Messiah. The proof of this will appear in the Notes on particular passages in the chapter. Its general design is, to console the people by the prospect of a great future deliverance under the Messiah, and by a prospect of the glories of his reign. He describes, (i.) The certainty that he would come, and his character; ver. 1-5. (ii.) The peace and prosperity which would follow from his advent; ver. 6-9. (iii.) The fact that the Gentiles would be called to partake of the privileges of his reign; ver. 10. (iv.) The restoration of the exiles to their native land under his reign; ver. 11, 12. (v.) The fact, that his reign would put a period to dissensions and strifes between the contending nations of the Jews; ver. 13; and (vi.) The universal prevalence of his religion, and the deliverance of his people; ver. 14-16.

AND [a] there shall come forth a rod out of the stem [b] of Jesse, and a branch [c] shall grow out of his roots:

a ch.53.2. b Acts 13.23; Rev.22.16. c Zec.6.12.

CHAPTER XI.

1. *And there shall come forth a rod.* In the previous chapter, the prophet had represented the Assyrian monarch and his army under the image of a dense and flourishing forest, with all its glory and grandeur. In opposition to this, he describes the illustrious personage who is the subject of this chapter, under the image of a slender twig or shoot, sprouting up from the root of a decayed and fallen tree. Between the Assyrian, therefore, and the person who is the subject of this chapter, there is a most striking and beautiful contrast. The one was at first magnificent—like a vast spreading forest—yet should soon fall and decay; the other was the little sprout of a decayed tree, which should yet rise, expand, and flourish. ¶ *A rod* (חֹטֶר *hhôtĕr*). This word occurs in but one other place; Prov. xiv. 3: 'In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride.' Here it means, evidently, *a branch*, *a twig*, *a shoot*, such as starts up from the roots of a decayed tree, and is synonymous with the word rendered *branch* (צֶמַח *tzĕmăhh*) in ch. iv. 2; see the Note on that place. ¶ *Out of the stem* (גֶּזַע). This word occurs but three times in the Old Testament; see Job xiv. 8; where it is rendered *stock*:

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the *stock* thereof die in the ground;

and in Isa. xl. 24: 'Yea, their *stock* shall not take root in the earth.' It means, therefore, the stock or stump of a tree that has been cut down—a stock, however, which may not be quite dead, but where it may send up a branch or shoot from its roots. It is beautifully applied to an ancient family that is fallen into decay, yet where there may be a descendant that shall rise and flourish; as a tree may fall and decay, but still there may be vitality in the root, and it shall send up a tender germ or sprout. ¶ *Of Jesse.* The father of David. It means, that he who is here spoken of should be of the family of Jesse, or David. Though Jesse had died, and though the ancient family of David would fall into decay, yet there would arise from that family an illustrious descendant. The beauty of this description is apparent, if we bear in recollection that, when the Messiah was born, the ancient and much honoured family of David had fallen into decay; that the mother of Jesus, though appertaining to that family, was poor, obscure, and unknown; and that, to all appearance, the glory of the family had departed. Yet from that, as from a long-decayed root in the ground, he

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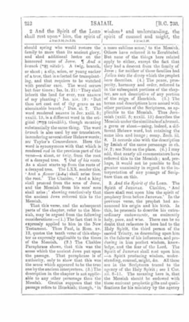

222 ISAIAH. [B.C. 738.

2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon [a] him, the spirit of wisdom [b] and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the

a Mat.3.16; Jn.3.34. b 1Cor.1.30.

should spring who would restore the family to more than its ancient glory, and shed additional lustre on the honoured name of Jesse. ¶ *And a branch* (נֵצֶר *nētzĕr*). A twig, branch, or shoot; a slip, scion, or young sucker of a tree, that is selected for transplanting, and that requires to be watched with peculiar care. The word occurs but four times; Isa. lx. 21: 'They shall inherit the land for ever, THE BRANCH of my planting;' Isa. xiv. 19: 'But thou art cast out of thy grave as an abominable branch;' Dan. xi. 7. The word rendered BRANCH in Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15, is a different word in the original (צֶמַח *tzĕmăhh*), though meaning substantially the same thing. The word *branch* is also used by our translators, in rendering several other Hebrew words; see Taylor's *Concordance*. Here the word is synonymous with that which is rendered *rod* in the previous part of the verse—a shoot, or twig, from the root of a decayed tree. ¶ *Out of his roots.* As a shoot starts up from the roots of a decayed tree. The LXX. render this, 'And a *flower* (ἄνθος) shall arise from the root.' The Chaldee, 'And a king shall proceed from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah from his sons' sons shall arise;' showing conclusively that the ancient Jews referred this to the Messiah.

That this verse, and the subsequent parts of the chapter, refer to the Messiah, may be argued from the following considerations:—(1.) The fact that it is expressly applied to him in the New Testament. Thus Paul, in Rom. xv. 12, quotes the tenth verse of this chapter as expressly applicable to the times of the Messiah. (2.) The Chaldee Paraphrase shows, that this was the sense which the ancient Jews put upon the passage. That paraphrase is of authority, only to show that this was the sense which appeared to be the true one by the ancient interpreters. (3.) The description in the chapter is not applicable to any other personage than the Messiah. Grotius supposes that the passage refers to Hezekiah; though, 'in a more sublime sense,' to the Messiah. Others have referred it to Zerubbabel. But none of the things here related apply to either, except the fact that they had a descent from the family of Jesse; for neither of those families had *fallen into the decay* which the prophet here describes. (4.) The peace, prosperity, harmony and order, referred to in the subsequent portions of the chapter, are not descriptive of any portion of the reign of Hezekiah. (5.) The terms and descriptions here accord with other portions of the Scriptures, as applicable to the Messiah. Thus Jeremiah (xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15) describes the Messiah under the similitude of a branch, a germ or shoot—using, indeed, a different Hebrew word, but retaining the same idea and image; comp. Zech. iii. 8. It accords also with the description by Isaiah of the same personage in ch. iv. 2; see Note on the place. (6.) I may add, that nearly all commentators have referred this to the Messiah; and, perhaps, it would not be possible to find greater unanimity in regard to the interpretation of any passage of Scripture than on this.

2. *And the Spirit of the* LORD. The Spirit of JEHOVAH. Chaldee, 'And there shall rest upon him the spirit of prophecy from before JEHOVAH.' In the previous verse, the prophet had announced his origin and his birth. In this, he proceeds to describe his extraordinary *endowments*, as eminently holy, pure, and wise. There can be no doubt that reference is here had to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the sacred Trinity, as descending upon him in the fulness of his influences, and producing in him perfect wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. The Spirit of JEHOVAH shall rest upon him—a Spirit producing wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, &c. All these are in the Scriptures traced to the agency of the Holy Spirit; see 1 Cor. xii. 8-11. The meaning here is, that the Messiah should be endowed with these eminent prophetic gifts and qualifications for his ministry by the agency

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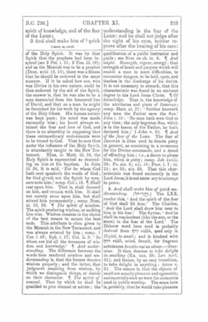

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spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of [1] 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:

1 scent, or, smell.

of the Holy Spirit. It was by that Spirit that the prophets had been inspired (see 2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Tim. iii. 16); and as the Messiah was to be a prophet (Deut. xviii. 15, 18), there was a fitness that he should be endowed in the same manner. If it be asked how one, who was Divine in his own nature, could be thus endowed by the aid of the Spirit, the answer is, that he was also to be a man descended from the honoured line of David, and that *as* a man he might be furnished for his work by the agency of the Holy Ghost. His human nature was kept pure; his mind was made eminently wise; his heart always retained the fear and love of God, and there is no absurdity in supposing that these extraordinary endowments were to be traced to God. That he *was* thus under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is abundantly taught in the New Testament. Thus, in Matt. iii. 16, the Holy Spirit is represented as descending on him at his baptism. In John iii. 34, it is said, 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;' comp. Col. i. 19. ¶ *Shall rest upon him.* That is, shall descend on him, and remain with him. It shall not merely *come* upon him, but shall attend him permanently; comp. Num. xi. 25, 26. ¶ *The spirit of wisdom.* The spirit producing wisdom, or making him wise. Wisdom consists in the choice of the best means to secure the best ends. This attribute is often given to the Messiah in the New Testament, and was always evinced by him; comp. 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 17; Col. ii. 3: 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' ¶ *And understanding.* The difference between the words here rendered *wisdom* and *understanding* is, that the former denotes wisdom properly; and the latter, that judgment resulting from wisdom, by which we distinguish things, or decide on their character. ¶ *The spirit of counsel.* That by which he shall be qualified to *give* counsel or advice; the qualification of a public instructor and guide; see Note on ch. ix. 6. ¶ *And might.* Strength, vigour, energy; that strength of heart and purpose which will enable a man to meet difficulties, to encounter dangers, to be bold, open, and fearless in the discharge of his duties. It is not necessary to remark, that this characteristic was found in an eminent degree in the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *Of knowledge.* That is, the knowledge of the attributes and plans of JEHOVAH; comp. Matt. xi. 27: 'Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son.' John i. 18: 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him;' 1 John v. 20. ¶ *And of the fear of the* LORD. The fear of JEHOVAH is often used to denote piety in general, as consisting in a reverence for the Divine commands, and a dread of offending him; *i.e.*, a desire to please him, which is piety; comp. Job xxviii. 28; Ps. xix. 9; cxi. 10; Prov. i. 7; iii. 13; xv. 33; xix. 23. That this characteristic was found eminently in the Lord Jesus, it is not necessary to attempt to prove.

3. *And shall make him of quick understanding.* (וַהֲרִיחוֹ) The LXX. render this, 'And the spirit of the fear of God shall fill him.' The Chaldee, 'And the Lord shall draw him near to him in his fear.' The Syriac, 'And he shall be resplendent (like the sun, or the stars) in the fear of the Lord.' The Hebrew word here used is probably derived from רִיחַ *rīāhh*, used only in Hiphil, *to smell*; and is kindred with רוּחַ *rūāhh*, *wind*, *breath*, for fragrant substances *breathe out* an odour.—*Gesenius.* It then denotes *to take delight in smelling* (Ex. xxx. 38; Lev. xxvi. 31); and thence, by an easy transition, to take delight in anything; Amos v. 21. The reason is, that the objects of smell are usually pleasant and agreeable; and especially such as were the aromatics used in public worship. The sense here is, probably, that he would take pleasure

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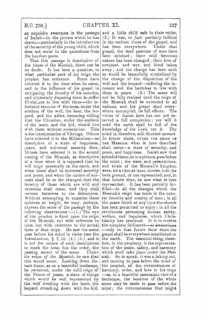

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an exquisite sweetness in the passage of Isaiah—in the picture which he has drawn—particularly in the introduction of the security of the young child, which does not occur in the quotations from the heathen poets.

That this passage is descriptive of the times of the Messiah, there can be no doubt. It has been a question, to what particular part of his reign the prophet has reference. Some have referred it to the time when he came, and to the influence of his gospel in mitigating the ferocity of his enemies, and ultimately disposing them to suffer Christians to live with them—the infuriated enemies of the cross, under the emblem of the wolf, the bear, the leopard, and the adder, becoming willing that the Christian, under the emblem of the lamb, and the kid, should live with them without molestation. This is the interpretation of Vitringa. Others have referred it to the Millennium—as descriptive of a state of happiness, peace, and universal security then. Others have referred it to the second coming of the Messiah, as descriptive of a time when it is supposed that he will reign personally on the earth, and when there shall be universal security and peace, and when the nature of animals shall be so far changed, that the ferocity of those which are wild and ravenous shall cease, and they shall become harmless to the defenceless. Without attempting to examine these opinions at length, we may, perhaps, express the sense of the passage by the following observations:—(1.) The eye of the prophet is fixed upon the reign of the Messiah, not with reference to time, but with reference to the actual facts of that reign. He saw the scene pass before his mind in vision (see the Introduction, § 7, iii. (4.) (5.), and it is not the nature of such descriptions to mark the *time*, but the order, the passing aspect of the scene. *Under the reign of the Messiah*, he saw that this would occur. Looking down distant times, as on a beautiful landscape, he perceived, under the mild reign of the Prince of peace, a state of things which would be well represented by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard crouching down with the kid, and a little child safe in their midst. (2.) It was, *in fact*, partially fulfilled in the earliest times of the gospel, and has been everywhere. Under that gospel, the mad passions of men have been subdued; their wild ferocious nature has been changed; their love of conquest, and war, and blood taken away; and the change has been such as would be beautifully symbolized by the change of the disposition of the wolf and the leopard—suffering the innocent and the harmless to live with them in peace. (3.) The scene will not be *fully* realized until the reign of the Messiah shall be extended to all nations, and his gospel shall everywhere accomplish its full effects. The vision of Isaiah here has not yet received a full completion; nor will it until the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, ver. 9. The mind is, therefore, still directed onward. In future times, UNDER THE REIGN OF THE MESSIAH, what is here described shall occur—a state of security, and peace, and happiness. Isaiah saw that splendid vision, as in a picture, pass before the mind; the wars, and persecutions, and trials of the Messiah's kingdom were, for a time at least, thrown into the back ground, or not represented, and, in that future time, he saw what is here represented. It has been partially fulfilled—in all the changes which the Messiah's reign has made in the natural ferocity and cruelty of men; in all the peace which at any time the church has been permitted to enjoy; in all the revolutions promoting human safety, welfare, and happiness, which Christianity has produced. It is to receive the complete fulfilment—[illegible]—only in that future time when the gospel shall be everywhere established on the earth. The essential thing, therefore, in the prophecy, is the representation of the peace, safety, and harmony which shall take place under the Messiah. So to speak, it was a taking out, and causing to pass before the mind of the prophet, all the circumstances of harmony, order, and love in his reign—as, in a beautiful panoramic view of a landscape, the beauties of the whole scene may be made to pass before the mind; the circumstances that might

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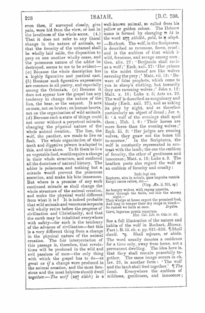

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even then, if surveyed closely, give pain, were hid from the view, or lost in the loveliness of the whole scene. (4.) That it does not refer to any literal change in the nature of animals, so that the ferocity of the untamed shall be wholly laid aside, the disposition to prey on one another wholly cease, and the poisonous nature of the adder be destroyed, seems to me to be evident—(*a*) Because the whole description has a highly figurative and poetical cast. (*b*) Because such figurative expressions are common in all poetry, and especially among the Orientals. (*c*) Because it does not appear how the gospel has any tendency to change the nature of the lion, the bear, or the serpent. It acts on men, not on brutes; on human hearts, not on the organization of wild animals. (*d*) Because such a state of things could not occur without a perpetual miracle, changing the *physical* nature of the whole animal creation. The lion, the wolf, the panther, are made to live on flesh. The whole organization of their teeth and digestive powers is adapted to this, and this alone. To fit them to live on vegetable food, would require a change in their whole structure, and confound all the doctrines of natural history. The *adder* is poisonous, and nothing but a miracle would prevent the poisonous secretion, and make his bite innocuous. But where is a promise of any such continued miracle as shall change the whole structure of the animal creation, and make the physical world different from what it is? It is indeed probable that wild animals and venomous serpents will wholly retire before the progress of civilization and Christianity, and that the earth may be inhabited everywhere with safety—for such is the tendency of the advance of civilization—but this is a very different thing from a change in the physical nature of the animal creation. The fair interpretation of this passage is, therefore, that revolutions will be produced in the wild and evil passions of men—the only thing with which the gospel has to do—as great *as if* a change were produced in the animal creation, and the most ferocious and the most helpless should dwell together.—*The wolf* (זְאֵב *zĕêbh*) is a well-known animal, so called from his yellow or golden colour. The Hebrew name is formed by changing ה *hê* in the word זָהָב *zâhâbh*, *gold*, to א *aleph*.—Bochart. The wolf, in the Scriptures, is described as ravenous, fierce, cruel; and is the emblem of that which is wild, ferocious, and savage among men; Gen. xlix. 27: 'Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf;' Ezek. xxii. 27: 'Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey;' Matt. vii. 15: 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves;' John x. 12; Matt. x. 16; Luke x. 3; Acts xx. 29. The wolf is described as sanguinary and bloody (Ezek. xxii. 27), and as taking its prey by night, and as therefore particularly an object of dread; Jer. v. 6: 'A wolf of the evenings shall spoil them; Hab. i. 8: 'Their horses are more fierce than the evening wolves;' Zeph. iii. 3: 'Her judges are evening wolves, they gnaw not the bones till to-morrow.' In the Scriptures, the wolf is constantly represented in contrast with the lamb; the one the emblem of ferocity, the other of gentleness and innocence; Matt. x. 16; Luke x. 3. The heathen poets also regard the wolf as an emblem of ferocity and cruelty:

Inde lupi ceu
Raptores, atra in nebula, quos improba ventris
Exegit cæcos rabies, etc.—
(Virg. *Æn.* ii. 355, *sq.*)

As hungry wolves, with raging appetite,
Scour through the fields, nor fear the stormy night—
Their whelps at home expect the promised food,
And long to temper their dry chaps in blood—
So rushed we forth at once. *Dryden.*

Cervi, luporum præda rapacium.
Hor. Car. Lib. iv. Ode iv. 50.

See a full illustration of the nature and habits of the wolf in Bochart, *Hieroz.* Part i. B. iii. ch. x. pp. 821–830. ¶ *Shall dwell.* גָּר. Shall sojourn, or abide. The word usually denotes a residence for a time only, away from home, not a permanent dwelling. The idea here is, that they shall remain peacefully together. The same image occurs in ch. lxv. 25, in another form: 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.' ¶ *The lamb.* Everywhere the emblem of mildness, gentleness, and innocence;

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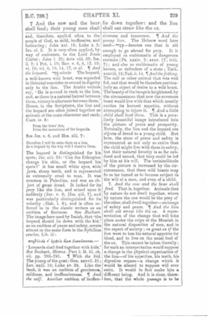

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7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

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and, therefore, applied often to the people of God, as mild, inoffensive, and forbearing; John xxi. 15; Luke x. 3; Isa. xl. 2. It is very often applied, by way of eminence, to the Lord Jesus Christ; John i. 29; Acts viii. 32; Isa. lii. 7; 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 6, 8, 12, 13; vi. 16; vii. 9, 10, 14, 17, *et al.* ¶ *And the leopard.* נָמֵר *nâmēr.* The leopard, a well-known wild beast, was regarded in Oriental countries as second in dignity only to the lion. The Arabic writers say, 'He is second in rank to the lion, and, as there is a natural hatred between them, victory is alternate between them.' Hence, in the Scriptures, the lion and the leopard are often joined together as animals of the same character and rank; Cant. iv. 8:

From the lions' den,
From the mountains of the leopards.

See Jer. v. 6, and Hos. xiii. 7:

Therefore I will be unto them as a lion,
As a leopard by the way will I observe them.

The leopard is distinguished for his spots; Jer. xiii. 23: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' it has small white eyes, wide jaws, sharp teeth, and is represented as extremely cruel to man. It was common in Palestine, and was an object of great dread. It lurked for its prey like the lion, and seized upon it suddenly (*Jer.* v. 6; Hos. xiii. 7), and was particularly distinguished for its velocity (Hab. i. 8), and is often referred to in the classic writers as an emblem of fleetness. See *Bochart.* The image here used by Isaiah, that 'the leopard should lie down with the kid,' as an emblem of peace and safety, occurs almost in the same form in the Sybilline oracles, Lib. iii:

παρδάλιές τ' ἐρίφοις ἅμα βοσκήσονται.—

'Leopards shall feed together with kids.' *See* Bochart, *Hieroz.* Part i. B. iii. ch. vii. pp. 786–791. ¶ *With the kid.* The young of the goat; Gen. xxxvii. 21; Lev. xxiii. 19; Luke xv. 29. Like the lamb, it was an emblem of gentleness, mildness, and inoffensiveness. ¶ *And the calf.* Another emblem of inoffensiveness and innocence. ¶ *And the young lion.* The Hebrew word here used—כְּפִיר—denotes one that is old enough to go abroad for prey. It is employed as emblematic of dangerous enemies (Ps. xxxiv. 2; xxxv. 17; lviii. 7); and also as emblematic of young heroes, or defenders of a state; Ezek. xxxviii. 13; Nah. ii. 14. ¶ *And the fatling.* The calf or other animal that was well fed, and that would be therefore particularly an object of desire to a wild beast. The beauty of the image is heightened, by the circumstance that now the ravenous beast would live with that which usually excites its keenest appetite, without attempting to injure it. ¶ *And a little child shall lead them.* This is a peculiarly beautiful image introduced into the picture of peace and prosperity. Naturally, the lion and the leopard are objects of dread to a young child. But here, the state of peace and safety is represented as not only so entire that the child might live with them in safety, but their natural ferocity is so far subdued and tamed, that they could be led by him at his will. The verisimilitude of the picture is increased by the circumstance, that these wild beasts *may be* so far tamed as to become subject to the will of a man, and even of a child.

7. *And the cow and the bear shall feed.* That is, together. Animals that by nature do not dwell together, where by nature the one would be the prey of the other, shall dwell together—an image of safety and peace. ¶ *And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.* A representation of the change that will take place under the reign of the Messiah in the natural disposition of men, and in the aspect of society; as great *as if* the lion were to lose his natural appetite for blood, and to live on the usual food of the ox. This cannot be taken literally; for such an interpretation would suppose a change in the physical organization of the lion—of his appetites, his teeth, his digestive organs—a change which it would be absurd to suppose will ever exist. It would in fact make him a different being. And it is clear, therefore, that the whole passage is to be

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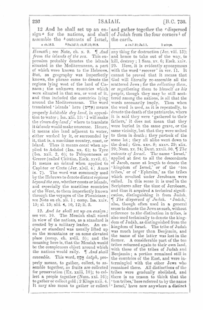

12 And he shall set up an ensign[a] for the nations, and shall assemble the [b]outcasts of Israel, and gather together the [c]dispersed of Judah from the four corners[1] of the earth.

a ch.18.3. b Ps.147.2; ch.27.13; 56.8. c Jn.7.35; Ja.1.1. 1 wings.

Hamath; see Note, ch. x. 9. ¶ *And from the islands of the sea.* This expression probably denotes the islands situated in the Mediterranean, a part of which were known to the Hebrews. But, as geography was imperfectly known, the phrase came to denote the regions lying west of the land of Canaan; the unknown countries which were situated in that sea, or west of it, and thus included the countries lying around the Mediterranean. The word translated 'islands' here (אִיִּים) means properly *habitable dry land*, in opposition to water; Isa. xlii. 15: 'I will make the rivers *dry land*;' where to translate it *islands* would make nonsense. Hence, it means also land adjacent to water, either washed by it, or surrounded by it, that is, a maritime country, coast, or island. Thus it means *coast* when applied to Ashdod (Isa. xx. 6); to Tyre (Isa. xxii. 2, 6); to Peloponnesus or Greece (called Chittim, Ezek. xxvii. 6). It means an *island* when applied to Caphtor or Crete (Jer. xlvii. 4; Amos ix. 7). The word was commonly used by the Hebrews to denote *distant regions beyond the sea*, whether coasts or islands, and especially the maritime countries of the West, to them imperfectly known through the voyages of the Phenicians; see Note on ch. xli. 1; comp. Isa. xxiv. 15; xl. 15; xlii. 4, 10, 12; li. 5.

12. *And he shall set up an ensign*; see ver. 10. The Messiah shall stand in view of the nations, as a standard is erected by a military leader. An ensign or standard was usually lifted up on the mountains or on some elevated place (comp. ch. xviii. 3); and the meaning here is, that the Messiah would be the conspicuous object around which the nations would rally. ¶ *And shall assemble.* This word, אָסַף *âsaph*, properly means, to gather, collect, to assemble together, as fruits are collected for preservation (Ex. xxiii. 10); to collect a people together (Num. xxi. 16); to gather or collect gold; 2 Kings xxii. 4. It may also mean to gather or collect any thing for destruction (Jer. viii. 13); and hence to take out of the way, to kill, destroy; 1 Sam. xv. 6; Ezek. xxiv. 29. Here, it is evidently synonymous with the word 'recover' in ver. 11. It cannot be proved that it means that God will *literally* re-assemble all the scattered Jews; for the *collecting them*, or regathering them to himself *as his people*, though they may be still scattered among the nations, is all that the words necessarily imply. Thus when the word is used, as it is repeatedly, to denote the death of the patriarchs, where it is said they were 'gathered to their fathers,' it does not mean that they were buried in the same grave, or the same vicinity, but that they were united to them in death; they partook of the same lot; they all alike went down to the dead; Gen. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; xlix. 29; Num. xx. 24; Deut. xxxii. 50. ¶ *The outcasts of Israel.* The name 'Israel,' applied at first to all the descendants of Jacob, came at length to denote the 'kingdom of Israel,' or of the 'ten tribes,' or of 'Ephraim,' as the tribes which revolted under Jeroboam were called. In this sense it is used in the Scriptures after the time of Jeroboam, and thus it acquired a technical signification, distinguishing it from Judah. ¶ *The dispersed of Judah.* 'Judah,' also, though often used in a general sense to denote the Jews as such, without reference to the distinction in tribes, is also used technically to denote the kingdom of Judah, as distinguished from the kingdom of Israel. The tribe of Judah was much larger than Benjamin, and the name of the latter was lost in the former. A considerable part of the ten tribes returned again to their own land, with those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; a portion remained still in the countries of the East, and were intermingled with the other Jews who remained there. All distinctions of the tribes were gradually abolished, and there is no reason to think that the 'ten tribes,' here referred to by the name 'Israel,' have now anywhere a distinct

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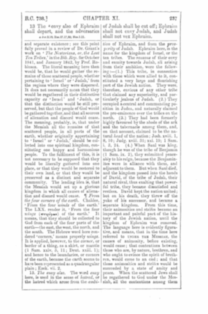

13 The [a]envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

a Jer.3.18; Eze.37.17,22; Hos.1.11.

and separate existence; see this point fully proved in a review of Dr. Grant's work on '*The Nestorians, or, the Lost Ten Tribes*,' in the *Bib. Rep.* for October 1841, and January 1842, by Prof. Robinson. The literal meaning here then would be, that he would gather the remains of those scattered people, whether pertaining to 'Israel' or 'Judah,' from the regions where they were dispersed. It does not necessarily mean that they would be regathered in their distinctive capacity *as* 'Israel' and 'Judah,' or that the distinction would be still preserved, but that the people of God would be gathered together, and that all sources of alienation and discord would cease. The meaning, probably, is, that under the Messiah all the remains of that scattered people, in all parts of the earth, whether originally appertaining to 'Israel' or 'Judah,' should be collected into one spiritual kingdom, constituting one happy and harmonious people. To the fulfilment of this, it is not necessary to be supposed that they would be literally gathered into one place, or that they would be restored to their own land, or that they would be preserved as a distinct and separate community. The leading idea is, that the Messiah would set up a glorious kingdom in which all causes of alienation and discord would cease. ¶ *From the four corners of the earth.* Chaldee, 'From the four *winds* of the earth.' The LXX. render it, 'From the four *wings* (πτερύγων) of the earth.' It means, that they should be collected to God from each of the four parts of the earth—the east, the west, the north, and the south. The Hebrew word here rendered 'corners,' means properly *wings*. It is applied, however, to the *corner*, or border of a thing, as a skirt, or mantle (1 Sam. xxiv. 5, 11; Deut. xxiii. 1); and hence to the boundaries, or corners of the earth, because the earth seems to have been represented as a quadrangular plain; Ezek. vii. 2.

13. *The envy also.* The word *envy* here, is used in the sense of *hatred*, or the hatred which arose from the *ambition* of Ephraim, and from the *prosperity* of Judah. Ephraim here, is the name for the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes. The *reasons* of their envy and enmity towards Judah, all arising from their ambition, were the following:—(1.) This tribe, in connection with those which were allied to it, constituted a very large and flourishing part of the Jewish nation. They were, therefore, envious of any other tribe that claimed any superiority, and particularly jealous of Judah. (2.) They occupied a central and commanding position in Judea, and naturally claimed the pre-eminence over the tribes on the north. (3.) They had been formerly highly favoured by the abode of the ark and the tabernacle among them, and, on that account, claimed to be the natural *head* of the nation; Josh. xviii. 1, 8, 10; Judg. xviii. 31; xxi. 19; 1 Sam. i. 3, 24. (4.) When Saul was king, though he was of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. ix. 2), they submitted peaceably to his reign, because the Benjaminites were in alliance with them, and adjacent to them. But when Saul died, and the kingdom passed into the hands of David, of the tribe of Judah, their natural rival, thus exalting that powerful tribe, they became dissatisfied and restless. David kept the nation united; but on his death, they threw off the yoke of his successor, and became a separate kingdom. From this time, their animosities and strifes became an important and painful part of the history of the Jewish nation, until the kingdom of Ephraim was removed. The language here is evidently figurative, and means, that in the time here referred to UNDER THE MESSIAH, the causes of animosity, before existing, would cease; that contentions between those who are, by nature, brethren, and who ought to evince the spirit of brethren, would come to an end; and that those animosities and strifes would be succeeded by a state of amity and peace. When the scattered Jews shall be regathered to God under the Messiah, all the contentions among them

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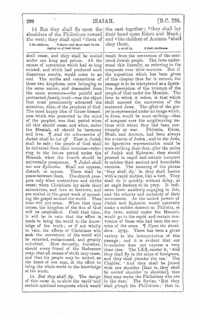

14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil [1]them of the east together; [2]they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and [a]the children of Ammon [3]shall obey them.

1 the children. 2 Edom and Moab shall be the laying on of their hand. a ch.60.14. 3 their obedience.

shall cease, and they shall be *united* under one king and prince. All the causes of contention which had so long existed, and which had produced such disastrous results, would come to an end. The strifes and contentions of these two kingdoms, once belonging to the same nation, and descended from the same ancestors—the painful and protracted *family broil*—was the object that most prominently attracted the attention, then, of the prophets of God. The most happy idea of future blessedness which was presented to the mind of the prophet, was that period when all this should cease, and when, under the Messiah, all should be harmony and love. ¶ *And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off.* That is, Judah shall be safe; the people of God shall be delivered from their enemies—referring to the future period under the Messiah, when the church should be universally prosperous. ¶ *Judah shall not vex Ephraim.* Shall not oppress, disturb, or oppose. There shall be peace between them. The church prospers only when contentions and strifes cease; when Christians lay aside their animosities, and love as brethren, and are *united* in the great work of spreading the gospel around the world. That time will yet come. *When* that time comes, the kingdom of the Son of God will be established. *Until* that time, it will be in vain that the effort is made to bring the world to the knowledge of the truth; or if not wholly in vain, the efforts of Christians who seek the conversion of the world will be retarded, embarrassed, and greatly enfeebled. How devoutly, therefore, should every friend of the Redeemer pray, that all causes of strife may cease, and that his people may be united, as the heart of one man, in the effort to bring the whole world to the knowledge of the truth.

14. *But they shall fly.* The design of this verse is, to show the rapid and certain spiritual conquests which would result from the conversion of the scattered Jewish people. The Jews understood this literally, as *referring* to the conquests over their enemies. But if the exposition which has been given of this chapter thus far is correct, the passage is to be interpreted as a figurative description of the triumph of the people of God under the Messiah. The *time* to which it refers, is that which shall succeed the conversion of the scattered Jews. The *effect* of the gospel is represented under an image which, to Jews, would be most striking—that of conquest over the neighbouring nations with whom they had been continually at war. Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, had been always the enemies of Judea; and to the Jews, no figurative representation could be more striking than that, *after* the union of Judah and Ephraim, they should proceed in rapid and certain conquest to subdue their ancient and formidable enemies. The meaning of the phrase 'they shall fly,' is, they shall hasten with a rapid motion, like a bird. They shall do it quickly, without delay, as an eagle hastens to its prey. It indicates their *suddenly* engaging in this, and the celerity and certainty of their movements. As the united powers of Judah and Ephraim would naturally make a sudden descent on Philistia, so the Jews, united under the Messiah, would go to the rapid and certain conversion of those who had been the enemies of the cross. ¶ *Upon the shoulders.* בְכָתֵף. There has been a great variety in the interpretation of this passage; and it is evident that our translation does not express a very clear idea. The LXX. render it, 'And they shall fly in the ships of foreigners, and they shall plunder the sea.' The Chaldee, 'And they shall be joined with one shoulder [that is, they shall be *united* shoulder to shoulder], that they may smite the Philistines who are in the west.' The Syriac, 'But they shall *plough* the Philistines;' that is,

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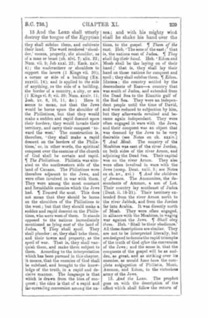

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15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the

they shall subdue them, and cultivate their land. The word rendered 'shoulder,' means, properly, *the shoulder*, as of a man or beast (ch. xlvi. 7; xlix. 22; Num. vii. 9; Job xxxi. 22; Ezek. xxiv. 4); the *undersetters* or shoulders to support the lavers (1 Kings vii. 30); a corner or side of a building (Ex. xxxviii. 14); and is applied to *the side* of anything, as the side of a building, the border of a country, a city, or sea (1 Kings vi. 8; vii. 39; Num. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xv. 8, 10, 11, &c.) Here it seems to mean, not that the Jews would be borne upon the shoulder of the Philistines, but that they would make a sudden and rapid descent upon *their borders;* they would invade their territory, and carry their conquest 'toward the west.' The construction is, therefore, 'they shall make a rapid descent on the borders of the Philistines,' or, in other words, the spiritual conquest over the enemies of the church of God shall be certain and rapid. ¶ *The Philistines.* Philistia was situated on the southwestern side of the land of Canaan. The Philistines were therefore adjacent to the Jews, and were often involved in war with them. They were among the most constant and formidable enemies which the Jews had. ¶ *Toward the west.* This does not mean that they should be borne on the shoulders of the Philistines *to* the west; but that they should make a sudden and rapid descent on the Philistines, who *were* west of them. It stands opposed to the nations immediately mentioned as lying *east* of the land of Judea. ¶ *They shall spoil.* They shall plunder; or, they shall take them, and their towns and property, as the *spoil* of war. That is, they shall vanquish them, and make them subject to them. According to the interpretation which has been pursued in this chapter, it means, that the enemies of God shall be subdued, and brought to the knowledge of the truth, in a rapid and decisive manner. The *language* is that which is drawn from the idea of conquest; the *idea* is that of a rapid and far-spreading conversion among the nations, to the gospel. ¶ *Them of the east.* Heb. 'The sons of the east;' that is, the nations east of Judea. ¶ *They shall lay their hand.* Heb. 'Edom and Moab shall be the laying on of their hand;' that is, they shall lay their hand on those nations for conquest and spoil; they shall subdue them. ¶ *Edom.* Idumea; the country settled by the descendants of Esau—a country that was south of Judea, and extended from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea. They were an independent people until the time of David, and were reduced to subjection by him, but they afterwards revolted and became again independent. They were often engaged in wars with the Jews, and their conquest was an object that was deemed by the Jews to be very desirable (see Notes on ch. xxxiv.) ¶ *And Moab.* The country of the Moabites was east of the river Jordan, on both sides of the river Arnon, and adjoining the Dead Sea. Their capital was on the river Arnon. They also were often involved in wars with the Jews (comp. Deut. xxiii. 3; see Notes on ch. xv., xvi.) ¶ *And the children of Ammon.* The Ammonites, the descendants of Ammon, a son of Lot. Their country lay southeast of Judea (Deut. ii. 19-21). Their territory extended from the river Arnon north to the river Jabbok, and from the Jordan far into Arabia. It was directly north of Moab. They were often engaged, in alliance with the Moabites, in waging war against the Jews. ¶ *Shall obey them.* Heb. 'Shall be their obedience.' All these descriptions are similar. They are not to be interpreted literally, but are designed to denote the rapid triumphs of the truth of God *after* the conversion of the Jews; and the sense is, that the conquests of the gospel will be as sudden, as great, and as striking over its enemies, as *would have been* the complete subjugation of Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Edom, to the victorious army of the Jews.

15. *And the* LORD. The prophet goes on with the description of the effect which shall follow the return of

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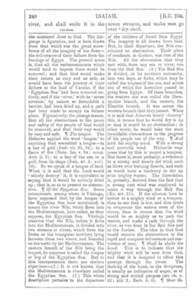

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river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make *men* go over [1]dry-shod.

[1] in shoes.

the scattered *Jews* to *God.* The language is figurative, and is here drawn from that which was the great storehouse of all the imagery of the Jews—the deliverance of their fathers from the bondage of Egypt. The general sense is, that all the embarrassments which would tend to impede them would be removed; and that God would make their return as *easy* and as *safe*, as would have been the journey of their fathers to the land of Canaan, if the 'Egyptian Sea' had been removed entirely, and if the 'river,' with its 'seven streams,' by nature so formidable a barrier, had been dried up, and a path had been made to occupy its former place. Figuratively, the passage means, that all the obstructions to the peace and safety of the people of God would be removed, and that their way would be easy and safe. ¶ *The tongue.* The Hebrews applied the word 'tongue' to anything that resembled a tongue—to a bar of gold (Josh. vii. 21, 24); to a flame of fire (Note, Isa. v. 24; comp. Acts ii. 3); to a bay of the sea, or a gulf, from its shape (Josh. xv. 5; xviii. 19). So we speak of a tongue of land. When it is said that the Lord would 'utterly destroy' it, it is equivalent to saying that it would be entirely dried up; that is, so as to present no obstruction. ¶ *Of the Egyptian Sea.* Some interpreters, among whom is Vitringa, have supposed that by the tongue of the Egyptian Sea here mentioned, is meant the river Nile, which flows into the Mediterranean, here called, as they suppose, the Egyptian Sea. Vitringa observes that the Nile, before it flows into the Mediterranean, is divided into two streams or rivers, which form the Delta or the triangular territory lying between these two rivers, and bounded on the north by the Mediterranean. The eastern branch of the Nile being the largest, he supposes is called the tongue or bay of the Egyptian Sea. But to this interpretation there are obvious objections—(1.) It is not known that the Mediterranean is elsewhere called the Egyptian Sea. (2.) This whole description pertains to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The imagery is all drawn from that. But, in their departure, the Nile constituted no obstruction. Their place of residence, in Goshen, was east of the Nile. All the obstruction that they met with, from any sea or river, was from the Red Sea. (3.) The Red Sea is divided, at its northern extremity, into two bays, or forks, which may be called the *tongues* of the sea, and across one of which the Israelites passed in going from Egypt. Of these branches, the western one was called the Heroopolite branch, and the eastern, the Elanitic branch. It was across the western branch that they passed. When it is said that Jehovah would 'destroy' this, it means that he would dry it up so that it would be no obstruction; in other words, he would take the most formidable obstructions to the progress of his people out of the way. ¶ *And with his mighty wind.* With a strong and powerful wind. Michaelis supposes that by this is meant a tempest. But there is, more probably, a reference to a strong and steady *hot* wind, such as blows over burning deserts, and such as would have a tendency to dry up even mighty waters. The illustration is, probably, derived from the fact that a strong east wind was employed to make a way through the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 21). If the allusion here be rather to a mighty wind or a tempest, than to one that is hot, and that tends to evaporate the waters even of the rivers, then it means that the wind would be so mighty as to part the waters, and make a path through the river, as was done in the Red Sea and at the Jordan. The *idea* is, that God would remove the obstructions to the rapid and complete deliverance and conversion of men. ¶ *Shall he shake his hand.* This is to indicate that the mighty wind will be sent from God, and that it is designed to effect this passage through the rivers. The shaking of the hand, in the Scripture, is usually an indication of anger, or of strong and settled purpose (see ch. x. 32; xiii. 2; Zech. ii. 9). ¶ *Over th*

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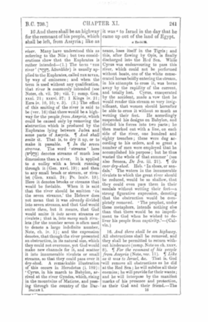

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16 And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was [a] to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

[a] Ex.14.29.

river. Many have understood this as referring to the Nile; but two considerations show that the Euphrates is rather intended—(1.) The term 'THE river' (הַנָּהָר, *hânnâhâr*) is usually applied to the Euphrates, called THE RIVER, by way of eminence; and when the term is used without any qualification, that river is commonly intended (see Notes, ch. vii. 20; viii. 7; comp. Gen. xxxi. 21; xxxvi. 37; 1 Kings iv. 21; Ezra iv. 10, 16; v. 3). (2.) The effect of this smiting of the river is said to be (ver. 16) that there would be a highway for the people *from Assyria*, which could be caused only by removing the obstruction which is produced by the Euphrates lying between Judea and some parts of Assyria. ¶ *And shall smite it.* That is, to dry it up, or to make it passable. ¶ *In the seven streams.* The word 'streams' here (נְחָלִים) denotes streams of much less dimensions than a river. It is applied to *a valley* with a brook running through it (Gen. xxvi. 19); and then to any small brook or stream, or rivulet (Gen. xxxii. 24; Ps. lxxiv. 15). Here it denotes brooks or streams that would be fordable. When it is said that the river should be smitten '*in* the seven streams,' the Hebrew does not mean that it was *already* divided into seven streams, and that God would smite *them*, but it means, that God would smite it *into* seven streams or rivulets; that is, into *many* such rivulets (for the number seven is often used to denote a large indefinite number, Note, ch. iv. 1); and the expression denotes, that though the river presented an obstruction, in its natural size, which they could not overcome, yet God would make new channels for it, and scatter it into innumerable rivulets or small streams, so that they could pass over it dry-shod. A remarkable illustration of this occurs in Herodotus (i. 189): 'Cyrus, in his march to Babylon, arrived at the river Gyndes, which, rising in the mountains of Matiene, and passing through the country of the Darneans, loses itself in the Tigris; and this, after flowing by Opis, is finally discharged into the Red Sea. While Cyrus was endeavouring to pass this river, which could not be performed without boats, one of the white consecrated horses boldly entering the stream, in his attempts to cross it, was borne away by the rapidity of the current, and totally lost. Cyrus, exasperated by the accident, made a vow that he would render this stream so very insignificant, that women should hereafter be able to cross it without so much as wetting their feet. He accordingly suspended his designs on Babylon, and divided his forces into two parts; he then marked out with a line, on each side of the river, one hundred and eighty trenches; these were dug according to his orders, and so great a number of men were employed that he accomplished his purpose; but he thus wasted the whole of that summer' (see also Seneca, *De Ira.* iii. 21). ¶ *Go over dry-shod.* Heb. 'In shoes, or sandals.' The waters in the innumerable rivulets to which the great river should be reduced, would be so shallow, that they could even pass them in their sandals without wetting their feet—a strong figurative expression, denoting that the obstruction would be completely removed. 'The prophet, under these metaphors, intends nothing else than that there would be no impediment to God when he wished to deliver his people from captivity.'—(Calvin.)

16. *And there shall be an highway.* All obstructions shall be removed, and they shall be permitted to return without hinderance (comp. Note on ch. xxxv. 8). ¶ *For the remnant of his people from Assyria* (Note, ver. 11). ¶ *Like as it was to Israel, &c.* That is, God will remove all obstructions as he did at the Red Sea; he will subdue all their enemies; he will provide for their wants; and he will interpose by the manifest marks of his presence and protection, as their God and their friend.—The

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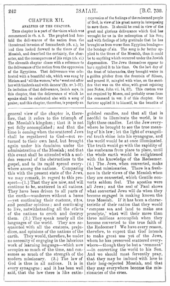

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CHAPTER XII.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHAPTER.

THIS chapter is a part of the vision which was commenced in ch. x. 5. The prophet had foretold the deliverance of the nation from the threatened invasion of Sennacherib (ch. x.); he had then looked forward to the times of the Messiah, and described the certainty, the character, and the consequences of *his* reign (ch. xi.) The eleventh chapter closes with a reference to the deliverance of the nation from the oppression of the Egyptians. That deliverance was celebrated with a beautiful ode, which was sung by Miriam and 'all the women,' who 'went out after her with timbrels and with dances' (Ex. xv. 1-21). In imitation of that deliverance, Isaiah says, in this chapter, that the deliverance of which he speaks shall be celebrated also with a song of praise; and this chapter, therefore, is properly an expression of the feelings of the redeemed people of God, in view of his great mercy in interposing to save them. It should be read in view of the great and glorious deliverance which God has wrought for us in the redemption of his Son; and with feelings of lofty gratitude that he has brought us from worse than Egyptian bondage—the bondage of sin. The song is far better applied to the times of the Messiah, than it could be to anything which occurred under the Jewish dispensation. The *Jews* themselves appear to have applied it to his time. On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, they brought water in a golden pitcher from the fountain of *Siloam*, and poured it, mingled with wine, on the sacrifice that was on the altar, with great rejoicing (see Notes, John vii. 14, 37). This custom was not required by Moses, and probably arose from the command in ver. 3 of this chapter. Our Saviour applied it to himself, to the benefits of

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general view of the chapter is, therefore, that it refers to the triumph of the Messiah's kingdom; that it is not yet fully accomplished; and that the time is coming when the scattered Jews shall be regathered to God—not returned to their own land, but brought again under his dominion under the administration of the Messiah; and that this event shall be attended with a sudden removal of the obstructions to the gospel, and to its rapid spread everywhere among the nations. Comparing this with the present state of the Jews, we may remark, in regard to this prospect—(1.) That they are now, and will continue to be, scattered in all nations. They have been driven to all parts of the earth—wanderers without a home—yet continuing their customs, rites, and peculiar opinions; and continuing to live, notwithstanding all the efforts of the nations to crush and destroy them. (2.) They speak nearly all the languages of the world. They are acquainted with all the customs, prejudices, and opinions of the nations of the earth. They would, therefore, be under no necessity of engaging in the laborious work of learning language—which now occupies so much of the time, and consumes so much of the strength of the modern missionary. (3.) The law of God is thus in all nations. It is in every synagogue; and it has been well said, that the law there is like extinguished candles, and that all that is needful to illuminate the world, is to light those candles. Let the Jew everywhere be brought to see the true meaning of his law; let the light of evangelical truth shine into his synagogue, and the world would be at once illuminated. The truth would go with the rapidity of the sunbeams from place to place, until the whole earth would be enlightened with the knowledge of the Redeemer. (4.) The Jews, when converted, make the best missionaries. There is a freshness in their views of the Messiah when they are converted, which Gentile converts seldom feel. The apostles were all Jews; and the zeal of Paul shows what converted Jews will do when they become engaged in making known the true Messiah. If it has been a characteristic of their nation that they would 'compass sea and land to make one proselyte,' what will their more than three millions accomplish when they become converted to the true faith of the Redeemer! We have every reason, therefore, to expect that God intends to make great use yet of the Jews, whom he has preserved scattered everywhere—though they be but a 'remnant'—in converting the world to his Son. And we should most fervently pray, that they may be imbued with love to their long-rejected Messiah, and that they may everywhere become the missionaries of the cross.

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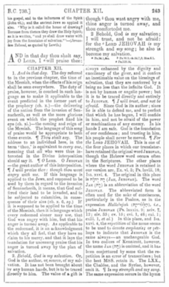

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his gospel, and to the influences of the Spirit (John vii.); and the ancient Jews so applied it also. 'Why is it called the house of drawing? Because from thence they draw the Holy Spirit; as it is written, "and ye shall draw water with joy from the fountains of salvation."'—(*Jerusalem Talmud*, as quoted by Lowth.)

AND in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I [a]will praise thee: though [b]thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the [c]LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation.

[a] Ps.34.1,&c. [b] Ps.30.5; ch.54.7,8; Hos.6.1. [c] Ps.118.14.

CHAPTER XII.

1. *And in that day.* The day referred to in the previous chapter, the time of the Messiah, when the effects of his reign shall be seen everywhere. The duty of praise, however, is couched in such language as to make it applicable to the event predicted in the former part of the prophecy (ch. x.)—the delivering of the nation from the invasion of Sennacherib, as well as the more glorious event on which the prophet fixed his eye (ch. xi.)—the coming and reign of the Messiah. The language of this song of praise would be appropriate to both these events. ¶ *Thou shalt say.* The address to an individual here, in the term 'thou,' is equivalent to *every one*, meaning that *all* who were thus interested in the Divine interposition should say it. ¶ *O Lord.* O JEHOVAH—the great author of this interposition. ¶ *I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me.* If this language is applied to the Jews, and supposed to be used by them in regard to the invasion of Sennacherib, it means, that God suffered their land to be invaded, and to be subjected to calamities, in consequence of their sins (ch. x. 6, *sq.*) If it is supposed to be applied to the time of the Messiah, then it is language which every redeemed sinner may use, that God was angry with him, but that his anger is turned away. As applicable to the redeemed, it is an acknowledgment which they all feel, that they have no claim to his mercy, and that it lays the foundation for unceasing praise that his anger is turned away by the plan of salvation.

2. *Behold, God is my salvation.* Or, God is the author, or source, of my salvation. It has not been brought about by any human hands, but is to be traced directly to him. The value of a gift is always enhanced by the dignity and excellency of the giver, and it confers an inestimable value on the blessings of salvation, that they are conferred by a being no less than the infinite God. It is not by human or angelic power; but it is to be traced directly and entirely to JEHOVAH. ¶ *I will trust, and not be afraid.* Since God is its author; since he is able to defend me, and to perfect that which he has begun, I will confide in him, and not be afraid of the power or machinations of any enemy. In his hands I am safe. God is the foundation of our confidence; and trusting in him, his people shall never be moved. ¶ *For the* LORD JEHOVAH. This is one of the four places in which our translators have retained the original word JEHOVAH, though the Hebrew word occurs often in the Scriptures. The other places where the word JEHOVAH is retained in our version are, Ex. vi. 3; Ps. lxviii. 18; Isa. xxvi. 4. The original in this place is [illegible] (JAH, JEHOVAH). The word JAH ([illegible]) is an abbreviation of the word JEHOVAH. The abbreviated form is often used for the sake of conciseness, particularly in the Psalms, as in the expression *Hallelujah* ([illegible]), *i.e.*, praise JEHOVAH (Ps. lxxxix. 9; xciv. 7, 12; civ. 35; cv. 15; cvi. 1, 48; cxi. 1; cxiii. 1, *et al.*) In this place, and Isa. xxvi. 4, the *repetition* of the name seems to be used to denote *emphasis*; or perhaps to indicate that JEHOVAH is the same always—an unchangeable God. In two codices of Kennicott, however, the name JAH ([illegible]) is omitted, and it has been conjectured by some that the repetition is an error of transcribers; but the best MSS. retain it. The LXX., the Chaldee, and the Syriac, however, omit it. ¶ *Is my strength and my song.* The same expression occurs in the hymn

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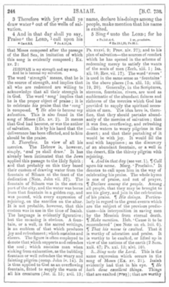

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3 Therefore with joy [a] shall ye draw water [b] out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise [c] the LORD, [1] call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing [d] unto the LORD; for he

[a] Cant.2.3. [b] Jn.4.10,14. [c] Ps.145.4-6. [1] or, proclaim. [d] Ex.15.1,21; Ps.98.1.

that Moses composed after the passage of the Red Sea, in imitation of which this song is evidently composed; Ex. xv. 2:

> JEHOVAH is my strength and my song,
> And he is become my salvation.

The word 'strength' means, that he is the source of strength, and implies that all who are redeemed are willing to acknowledge that all their strength is in God. The word 'song' implies that he is the proper object of praise; it is to celebrate *his* praise that the 'song' is composed. ¶ *He also is become my salvation.* This is also found in the song of Moses (Ex. xv. 2). It means that God had become, or was the author of salvation. It is by his hand that the deliverance has been effected, and to him should be the praise.

3. *Therefore.* In view of all his mercies. The Hebrew is, however, simply, '*and* ye shall draw.' It has already been intimated that the Jews applied this passage to the Holy Spirit; and that probably on this they based their custom of drawing water from the fountain of Siloam at the feast of the dedication (Note, John vii. 37). The fountain of Siloam was in the eastern part of the city, and the water was borne from that fountain in a golden cup, and was poured, with every expression of rejoicing, on the sacrifice on the altar. It is not probable, however, that this custom was in use in the time of Isaiah. The language is evidently figurative; but the meaning is obvious. A fountain, or a well, in the sacred writings, is an emblem of that which produces joy and refreshment; which sustains and cheers. The figure is often employed to denote that which supports and refreshes the soul; which sustains man when sinking from exhaustion, as the bubbling fountain or well refreshes the weary and fainting pilgrim (comp. John iv. 14). It is thus applied to God as an overflowing fountain, fitted to supply the wants of all his creatures (Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13; Ps. xxxvi. 9; Prov. xiv. 27); and to his plan of salvation—the sources of comfort which he has opened in the scheme of redeeming mercy to satisfy the wants of the souls of men (Zech. xiii. 1; Isa. xli. 18; Rev. vii. 17). The word 'rivers' is used in the same sense as 'fountains' in the above places (Isa. xlii. 15; xliii. 19, 20). Generally, in the Scriptures, streams, fountains, rivers, are used as emblematic of the abundant fulness and richness of the mercies which God has provided to supply the spiritual necessities of men. The idea here is, therefore, that they should partake abundantly of the mercies of salvation; that it was free, overflowing, and refreshing—like waters to weary pilgrims in the desert; and that their partaking of it would be with joy. It would fill the soul with happiness; as the discovery of an abundant fountain, or a well in the desert, fills the thirsty pilgrim with rejoicing.

4. *And in that day* (see ver. 1). ¶ *Call upon his name.* Marg. 'Proclaim.' It denotes to call upon him in the way of celebrating his praise. The whole hymn is one of praise, and not of prayer. ¶ *Declare among the people.* Among all people, that they may be brought to see his glory, and join in the celebration of his praise. ¶ *His doings.* Particularly in regard to the great events which are the subject of the previous predictions—his interposition in saving men by the Messiah from eternal death. ¶ *Make mention.* Heb. 'Cause it to be remembered' (see Note on ch. lxii. 6). ¶ *That his name is exalted.* That it is worthy of adoration and praise. It is worthy to be exalted, or lifted up in view of the nations of the earth (2 Sam. xxii. 47; Ps. xxi. 13; xlvi. 10).

5. *Sing unto the Lord.* This is the same expression which occurs in the song of Moses (Ex. xv. 21). Isaiah evidently had that in his eye. ¶ *He hath done excellent things.* Things that are exalted ([illegible]); that are worthy

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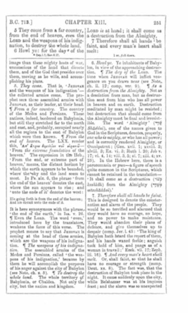

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5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, *even* the LORD and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

6 Howl ye: for the day [a] of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

7 Therefore shall all hands [1] be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

a Zep. 1.7; Rev. 6.17.

1 or, *fall down.*

image than these mighty hosts of war, unconscious of the hand that directs them, and of the God that presides over them, moving as he wills, and accomplishing his plans.

5. *They come.* That is, 'JEHOVAH and the weapons of his indignation'—the collected armies come. The prophet sees these assembled armies with JEHOVAH, as their leader, at their head. ¶ *From a far country.* The country of the Medes and Persians. These nations, indeed, bordered on Babylonia, but still they stretched far to the north and east, and, probably, occupied nearly all the regions to the east of Babylon which were then known. ¶ *From the end of heaven.* The LXX. render this, Ἀπ' ἄκρου θεμελίου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—'From *the extreme foundation* of the heaven.' The expression in the Heb., 'From the end, or extreme part of heaven,' means, the distant horizon by which the earth appears to be bounded, where the sky and the land seem to meet. In Ps. xix. 6, the phrase 'from the end of the heaven' denotes the east, where the sun appears to rise; and 'unto the ends of it' denotes the west:

His going forth is from the end of the heaven;
And his circuit unto the ends of it.

It is here synonymous with the phrase, 'the end of the earth,' in Isa. v. 26. ¶ Even *the* LORD. The word 'even,' introduced here by the translators, weakens the force of this verse. The prophet means to say that JEHOVAH is coming at the head of these armies, which are the weapons of his indignation. ¶ *The weapons of his indignation.* The assembled armies of the Medes and Persians, called 'the weapons of his indignation,' because by them he will accomplish the purposes of his anger against the city of Babylon (see Note, ch. x. 5). ¶ *To destroy the whole land.* The whole territory of Babylonia, or Chaldea. Not only the city, but the nation and kingdom.

6. *Howl ye.* Ye inhabitants of Babylon, in view of the approaching destruction. ¶ *The day of the* LORD. The time when JEHOVAH will inflict vengeance on you draws near (see Note, ch. ii. 12; comp. ver. 9). ¶ *As a destruction from the Almighty.* Not as a desolation from man, but as destruction sent from him who has all power in heaven and on earth. Destruction meditated by man might be resisted; but destruction that should come from the Almighty must be final and irresistible. The word 'Almighty' (שַׁדַּי *Shăddai*), one of the names given to God in the Scriptures, denotes, properly, *one who is mighty*, or who has all power; and is correctly rendered Almighty, or Omnipotent; (Gen. xvii. 1; xxviii. 3; xlviii. 3; Ex. vi. 3; Ruth i. 20; Job v. 17; vi. 4, 14; viii. 3, 5; xi. 7; xiii. 4; xv. 25). In the Hebrew here, there is a paronomasia or *pun*—a figure of speech quite common in the Scriptures, which cannot be retained in the translation—'It shall come as *a destruction* (כְּשֹׁד *keshōdh*) from the Almighty (מִשַּׁדַּי *mishshăddai*).'

7. *Therefore shall all hands be faint.* This is designed to denote the consternation and alarm of the people. They would be so terrified and alarmed that they would have no courage, no hope, and no power to make resistance. They would abandon their plans of defence, and give themselves up to despair (comp. Jer. l. 43: 'The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble; anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail;' Ezek. vii. 17; Zeph. iii. 16). ¶ *And every man's heart shall melt.* Or, shall faint, so that he shall have no courage or strength (comp. Deut. xx. 8). The fact was, that the destruction of Babylon took place in the night. It came suddenly upon the city, while Belshazzar was at his impious feast; and the alarm was so unexpected

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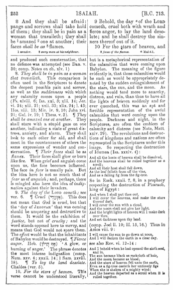

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8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be [1] amazed [2] one at another; their faces *shall be as* [3] flames.

9 Behold, the day [a] 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.

10 For the stars of heaven, and

1 *wonder.* 2 *every man at his neighbour.*

3 *faces of the flames.* a Mal. 4.1.

and produced such consternation, that no defence was attempted (see Dan. v. 30; comp. Notes on ch. xlv. 1)

8. *They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth.* This comparison is often used in the Scriptures to denote the deepest possible pain and sorrow, as well as the *suddenness* with which any calamity comes upon a people (Ps. xlviii. 6; Isa. xxi. 3; xlii. 14; Jer. vi. 24; xiii. 21; xxii. 23; xlix. 24; l. 43; Hos. xiii. 13; Mic. iv. 9, 10; John xvi. 21; Gal. iv. 19; 1 Thess. v. 3). ¶ *They shall be amazed one at another.* They shall stare with a stupid gaze on one another, indicating a state of great distress, anxiety, and alarm. They shall look to each other for aid, and shall meet in the countenances of others the same expressions of wonder and consternation. ¶ *Their faces* shall be as *flames.* Their faces shall glow or burn like fire. When *grief* and anguish come upon us, the face becomes inflamed. The face *in fear* is usually pale. But the idea here is not so much that of *fear* as of *anguish*; and, perhaps, there is mingled also here the idea of *indignation* against their invaders.

9. *The day of the* LORD *cometh*; see ver. 6. ¶ *Cruel* (אַכְזָרִי). This does not mean that *God* is cruel, but that the 'day of JEHOVAH' that was coming should be unsparing and destructive to them. It would be the exhibition of *justice*, but not of *cruelty*; and the word stands opposed here to *mercy*, and means that God would not spare them. The *effect* would be that the inhabitants of Babylon would be destroyed. ¶ *Fierce anger.* Heb. (חֲרוֹן אַף) 'A glow, or burning of anger.' The phrase denotes the most intense indignation (comp. Num. xxv. 4; xxxii. 14; 1 Sam. xxviii. 18). ¶ *To lay the land desolate.* Chaldea (ver. 5).

10. *For the stars of heaven.* This verse cannot be understood literally, but is a metaphorical representation of the calamities that were coming upon Babylon. The meaning of the figure evidently is, that those calamities would be such as would be appropriately denoted by the sudden extinguishment of the stars, the sun, and the moon. As nothing would tend more to anarchy, distress, and ruin, than thus to have all the lights of heaven suddenly and for ever quenched, this was an apt and forcible representation of the awful calamities that were coming upon the people. Darkness and night, in the Scriptures, are often the emblem of calamity and distress (see Note, Matt. xxiv. 29). The revolutions and destructions of kingdoms and nations are often represented in the Scriptures under this image. So respecting the destruction of Idumea (Isa. xxxiv. 4):

And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll;
And all their host shall fall down,
As the leaf falleth from off the vine,
And as a falling fig from the fig-tree.

So in Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8, in a prophecy respecting the destruction of Pharaoh, king of Egypt:

And when I shall put thee out,
I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark,
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
And the moon shall not give her light.
And the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee,
And set darkness upon thy land.

(comp. Joel ii. 10; iii. 15, 16.) Thus in Amos viii. 9:

I will cause the sun to go down at noon,
And I will darken the earth in a clear day.

see also Rev. vi. 12–14:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo,
The sun became black as sackcloth of hair,
And the moon became as blood;
And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth,
Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs
When she is shaken of a mighty wind;
And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.

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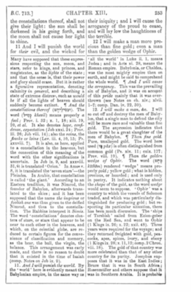

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the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

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.

12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Many have supposed that these expressions respecting the sun, moon, and stars, refer to kings, and princes, and magistrates, as the *lights* of the state; and that the sense is, that their power and glory should cease. But it is rather a figurative representation, denoting calamity *in general*, and describing a state of extreme distress, such as *would be* if all the lights of heaven should suddenly become extinct. ¶ *And the constellations thereof* (וּכְסִילֵיהֶם). The word (כְּסִיל *khesil*) means properly *a fool*; Prov. i. 32; x. 1, 18; xiii. 19, 20, *et al.* It also denotes *hope, confidence, expectation* (Job xxxi. 24; Prov. iii. 26; Job viii. 14); also the *reins*, the *flanks or loins* (Lev. iii. 4, 10, 15; Ps. xxxviii. 7). It is also, as here, applied to a constellation in the heavens, but the connection of this meaning of the word with the other significations is uncertain. In Job ix. 9, and xxxviii. 31, it is translated 'Orion.' In Amos v. 8, it is translated the 'seven stars'—the Pleiades. In Arabic, that constellation is called 'the giant.' According to an Eastern tradition, it was Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, afterwards translated to the skies; and it has been supposed that the name *the impious* or *foolish one* was thus given to the deified Nimrod, and thus to the constellation. The Rabbins interpret it *Simis.* The word 'constellations' denotes clusters of stars, or stars that appear to be near to each other in the heavens, and which, on the celestial globe, are reduced to certain figures for the convenience of classification and memory, as the bear, the bull, the virgin, the balance. This arrangement was early made, and there is no reason to doubt that it existed in the time of Isaiah (comp. Notes on Job ix. 9).

11. *And I will punish the world.* By the 'world' here is evidently meant the Babylonian empire, in the same way as 'all the world' in Luke ii. 1, means Judea; and in Acts xi. 28, means the Roman empire. Babylonia, or Chaldea, was the most mighty empire then on earth, and might be said to comprehend the whole world. ¶ *And I will cause the arrogancy.* This was the prevailing sin of Babylon, and it was on account of this *pride* mainly that it was overthrown (see Notes on ch. xiv.; xlvii. 1–7; comp. Dan. iv. 22, 30).

12. *I will make a man, &c.* I will so cut off and destroy the men of Babylon, that a single man to defend the city will be more rare and valuable than fine gold. The expression indicates that there would be a great slaughter of the men of Babylon. ¶ *Than fine gold.* Pure, unalloyed gold. The word here used (פָּז *pāz*) is often distinguished from common gold (Ps. xix. 11; cxix. 127; Prov. viii. 19). ¶ *Than the golden wedge of Ophir.* The word (כֶּתֶם *kĕthĕm*) rendered 'wedge' means properly *gold*; yellow gold; what is hidden, precious, or hoarded; and is used only in poetry. It indicates nothing about the *shape* of the gold, as the word *wedge* would seem to suppose. 'Ophir' was a country to which the vessels of Solomon traded, and which was particularly distinguished for producing gold; but respecting its particular situation, there has been much discussion. The 'ships of Tarshish' sailed from Ezion-geber on the Red Sea, and went to Ophir (1 Kings ix. 26; x. 22; xxii. 48). Three years were required for the voyage; and they returned freighted with gold, peacocks, apes, spices, ivory, and ebony (1 Kings ix. 28; x. 11, 12; comp. 2 Chron. viii. 18). The gold of that country was more celebrated than that of any other country for its purity. Josephus supposes that it was in the East Indies; Bruce that it was in South Africa; Rosenmüller and others suppose that it was in Southern Arabia. It is probable

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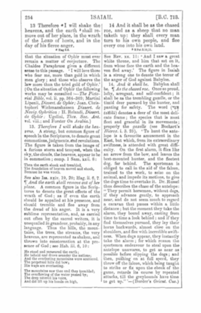

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13 Therefore [a]I will shake the heavens, and the earth [b]shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

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.

[a] Hag.2.6. [b] 2 Pet.3.10,11.

that the situation of Ophir must ever remain a matter of conjecture. The Chaldee Paraphrase gives a different sense to this passage. 'I will love those who fear me, more than gold in which men glory; and those who observe the law more than the tried gold of Ophir.' (On the situation of Ophir the following works may be consulted:—*The Pictorial Bible*, vol. ii. pp. 364–369; Martini Lipenii, *Dissert. de Ophir;* Joan. Christopheri Wichmanshausen *Dissert. de Navig. Ophritica;* H. Relandi, *Dissert. de Ophir;* Ugolini, *Thes. Sac. Ant.* vol. viii.; and Forster *On Arabia*.)

13. *Therefore I will shake the heavens.* A strong, but common figure of speech in the Scriptures, to denote great commotions, judgments, and revolutions. The figure is taken from the image of a furious storm and tempest, when the sky, the clouds, the heavens, appear to be in commotion; comp. 1 Sam. xxii. 8:

Then the earth shook and trembled,
The foundation of heaven moved and shook,
Because he was wroth.

See also Isa. xxiv. 19, 20; Hag. ii. 6, 7. ¶ *And the earth shall remove out of her place.* A common figure in the Scriptures to denote the great effects of the wrath of God; as if even the earth should be appalled at his presence, and should tremble and flee away from the dread of his anger. It is a very sublime representation, and, as carried out often by the sacred writers, it is unequalled in grandeur, probably, in any language. Thus the hills, the mountains, the trees, the streams, the very heavens, are represented as shaken, and thrown into consternation at the presence of God; see Hab. iii. 6, 10:

He stood and measured the earth;
He beheld and drove asunder the nations;
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills did bow;
His ways are everlasting.

The mountains saw thee and they trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by;
The deep uttered his voice,
And did lift up his hands on high.

See Rev. xx. 11: 'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.' The figure in Isaiah is a strong one to denote the terror of the anger of God against Babylon.

14. *And it shall be.* Babylon shall be. ¶ *As the chased roe.* Once so proud, lofty, arrogant, and self-confident; it shall be as the trembling gazelle, or the timid deer pursued by the hunter, and panting for safety. The word (צבי *tsěbhi*) denotes a deer of the most delicate frame; the species that is most fleet and graceful in its movements; properly the *gazelle* (see Bochart's *Hieroz.* i. 3. 25). 'To hunt the antelope is a favourite amusement in the East, but which, from its extraordinary swiftness, is attended with great difficulty. On the first alarm, it flies like an arrow from the bow, and leaves the best-mounted hunter, and the fleetest dog, far behind. The sportsman is obliged to call in the aid of the falcon, trained to the work, to seize on the animal, and impede its motions, to give the dogs time to overtake it. Dr. Russel thus describes the chase of the antelope: "They permit horsemen, without dogs, if they advance gently, to approach near, and do not seem much to regard a caravan that passes within a little distance; but the moment they take the alarm, they bound away, casting from time to time a look behind; and if they find themselves pursued, they lay their horns backwards, almost close on the shoulders, and flee with incredible swiftness. When dogs appear, they instantly take the alarm; for which reason the sportsmen endeavour to steal upon the antelope unawares, to get as near as possible before slipping the dogs; and then, pushing on at full speed, they throw off the falcon, which being taught to strike or fix upon the cheek of the game, retards its course by repeated attacks, till the greyhounds have time to get up."'—(Burder's *Orient. Cus.*)

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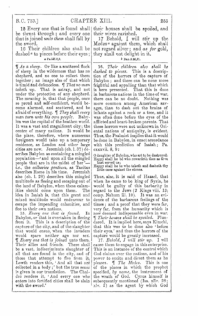

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15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by the sword.

16 Their children also shall be dashed[a] to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes[b] against them, which shall not regard silver; and *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it.

[a] Ps.137.8,9. [b] Dan.5.28,31.

¶ *As a sheep.* Or like a scattered flock of sheep in the wilderness that has no shepherd, and no one to collect them together; an image also of that which is timid and defenceless. ¶ *That no man taketh up.* That is astray, and not under the protection of any shepherd. The meaning is, that that people, once so proud and self-confident, would become alarmed, and scattered, and be afraid of everything. ¶ *They shall every man turn unto his own people.* Babylon was the capital of the heathen world. It was a vast and magnificent city; the centre of many nations. It would be the place, therefore, where numerous foreigners would take up a temporary residence, as London and other large cities are now. *Jeremiah* (ch. l. 37) describes Babylon as containing a mingled population—'and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her'—*i.e.*, the *colluvies gentium*, as Tacitus describes Rome in his time. *Jeremiah* also (ch. l. 28) describes this mingled multitude as fleeing and escaping out of the land of Babylon, when these calamities should come upon them. The idea in Isaiah is, that this great and mixed multitude would endeavour to escape the impending calamities, and flee to their own nations.

15. *Every one that is found.* In Babylon, or that is overtaken in fleeing from it. This is a description of the capture of the city, and of the slaughter that would ensue, when the invaders would spare neither age nor sex. ¶ *Every one that is joined* unto them. Their allies and friends. There shall be a vast, indiscriminate slaughter of all that are found in the city, and of those that attempt to flee from it. Lowth renders this, 'And all that are collected in a body;' but the true sense is given in our translation. The Chaldee renders it, 'And every one who enters into fortified cities shall be slain with the sword.'

16. *Their children also shall be dashed to pieces.* This is a description of the horrors of the capture of Babylon; and there can be none more frightful and appalling than that which is here presented. That this is done in barbarous nations in the time of war, there can be no doubt. Nothing was more common among American savages, than to dash out the brains of infants against a rock or a tree, and it was often done before the eyes of the afflicted and heart-broken parents. That these horrors were not unknown in Oriental nations of antiquity, is evident. Thus, the Psalmist implies that it would be done in Babylon, in exact accordance with this prediction of Isaiah; Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9:

O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed:
Happy shall he be who rewardeth thee as thou hast served us;
Happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Thus, also, it is said of Hazael, that when he came to be king of Syria, he would be guilty of this barbarity in regard to the Jews (2 Kings viii. 12; comp. Nahum iii. 10). It was an evidence of the barbarous feelings of the times; and a proof that they were far, very far, from the humanity which is now deemed indispensable even in war. ¶ *Their houses shall be spoiled.* Plundered. It is implied here, says Kimchi, that this was to be done also 'before their eyes,' and thus the horrors of the capture would be greatly increased.

17. *Behold, I will stir up.* I will cause them to engage in this enterprise. This is an instance of the control which God claims over the nations, and of his power to excite and direct them as he pleases. ¶ *The Medes.* This is one of the places in which the prophet specified, *by name*, the instrument of the wrath of God. Cyrus himself is subsequently mentioned (Isa. xliv. 28; xlv. 1) as the agent by which God

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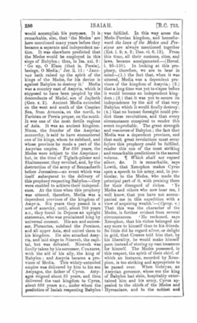

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would accomplish his purposes. It is remarkable, also, that 'the Medes' are here mentioned many years before they became a separate and independent nation. It was elsewhere predicted that the Medes would be employed in this siege of Babylon; thus, in Isa. xxi. 2: 'Go up, O Elam (that is, Persia), besiege, O Media;' Jer. li. 11: 'JEHOVAH hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, for his device is against Babylon to destroy it.' Media was a country east of Assyria, which is supposed to have been peopled by the descendants of Madai, son of Japheth (Gen. x. 2). Ancient Media extended on the west and south of the Caspian Sea, from Armenia, on the north, to Faristan or Persia proper, on the south. It was one of the most fertile regions of Asia. It was an ancient kingdom. Ninus, the founder of the Assyrian monarchy, is said to have encountered one of its kings, whom he subdued, and whose province he made a part of the Assyrian empire. For 520 years, the Medes were subject to the Assyrians; but, in the time of Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser, they revolted, and, by the destruction of the army of Sennacherib before Jerusalem—an event which was itself *subsequent* to the delivery of this prophecy respecting Babylon—they were enabled to achieve their independence. At the time when this prophecy was uttered, therefore, Media was a dependent province of the kingdom of Assyria. Six years they passed in a sort of anarchy, until, about 700 years B.C., they found in Dejoces an upright statesman, who was proclaimed king by universal consent. His son and successor, Phraortes, subdued the *Persians*, and all upper Asia, and united them to his kingdom. He also attacked Assyria, and laid siege to Nineveh, the capital, but was defeated. Nineveh was finally taken by his successor, Cyaxares, with the aid of his ally, the king of Babylon; and Assyria became a province of Media. This widely-extended empire was delivered by him to his son Astyages, the father of Cyrus. Astyages reigned about 35 years, and then delivered the vast kingdom to Cyrus, about 556 years B.C., under whom the prediction of Isaiah respecting Babylon was fulfilled. In this way arose the Medo-Persian kingdom, and henceforward *the laws of the Medes and Persians* are always mentioned together (Est. i. 9; x. 2; Dan. vi. 8, 12). From this time, all their customs, rites, and laws, became amalgamated.—(*Herod.* i. 95–130). In looking at this prophecy, therefore, we are to bear in mind—(1.) the fact that, when it was uttered, Media was a dependent province of the kingdom of Assyria; (2.) that a long time was yet to elapse before it would become an independent kingdom; (3.) that it was yet to secure its independence by the aid of that very Babylon which it would finally destroy; (4.) that no human foresight could predict these revolutions, and that every circumstance conspired to render this event *improbable*. The great strength and resources of Babylon; the fact that Media was a dependent province, and that such great revolutions must occur *before* this prophecy *could* be fulfilled, render this one of the most striking and remarkable predictions in the sacred volume. ¶ *Which shall not regard silver, &c.* It is remarkable, says Lowth, that Xenophon makes Cyrus open a speech to his army, and, in particular, to the Medes, who made the principal part of it, with praising them for their disregard of riches. 'Ye Medes and others who now hear me, I well know, that you have not accompanied me in this expedition with a view of acquiring wealth.'—(*Cyrop.* v.) That this was the character of the Medes, is further evident from several circumstances. 'He reckoned, says Xenophon, that his riches belonged not any more to himself than to his friends. So little did he regard silver, or delight in gold, that Crœsus told him that, by his liberality, he would make himself poor, instead of storing up vast treasures for himself. The Medes possessed, in this respect, the spirit of their chief, of which an instance, recorded by Xenophon, is too striking and appropriate to be passed over. When Gobryas, an Assyrian governor, whose son the king of Babylon had slain, hospitably entertained him and his army, Cyrus appealed to the chiefs of the Medes and Hyrcanians, and to the noblest and

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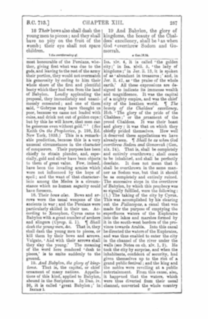

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIII. 257

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.

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be [1] as when God [a] overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

[1] the overthrowing of. [a] Gen. 19.24.

most honourable of the Persians, whether, giving first what was due to the gods, and leaving to the rest of the army their portion, they would not overmatch his generosity by ceding to him their whole share of the first and plentiful booty which they had won from the land of Babylon. Loudly applauding the proposal, they immediately and unanimously consented; and one of them said, "Gobryas may have thought us poor, because we came not loaded with coins, and drink not out of golden cups; but by this he will know, that men can be generous even without gold."' (See Keith *On the Prophecies*, p. 198, Ed. New York, 1833.) This is a remarkable prediction, because this is a very unusual circumstance in the character of conquerors. Their purpose has been chiefly to obtain plunder, and, especially, gold and silver have been objects to them of great value. Few, indeed, have been the invading armies which were not influenced by the hope of spoil; and the want of that characteristic among the Medes is a circumstance which no human sagacity could have foreseen.

18. Their *bows also*. Bows and arrows were the usual weapons of the ancients in war; and the Persians were particularly skilled in their use. According to Xenophon, Cyrus came to Babylon with a great number of archers and slingers (*Cyrop.* ii. 1). ¶ *Shall dash the young men, &c.* That is, they shall dash the young men to pieces, or kill them by their bows and arrows. Vulgate, 'And with their arrows shall they slay the young.' The meaning of the word here rendered 'dash to pieces,' is to smite suddenly to the ground.

19. *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms.* That is, the capital, or chief ornament of many nations. Appellations of this kind, applied to Babylon, abound in the Scriptures. In Dan. iv. 30, it is called 'great Babylon;' in Isa. xiv. 4, it is called 'the golden city;' in Isa. xlvii. 5, 'the lady of kingdoms;' in Jer. li. 13, it is spoken of as 'abundant in treasures;' and, in Jer. li. 41, as 'the praise of the whole earth.' All these expressions are designed to indicate its immense wealth and magnificence. It was the capital of a mighty empire, and was the chief city of the heathen world. ¶ *The beauty of the Chaldees' excellency.* Heb. 'The glory of the pride of the Chaldees;' or the ornament of the proud Chaldees. It was their boast and glory; it was that on which they chiefly prided themselves. How well it deserved these appellations we have already seen. ¶ *Shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah* (Gen. xix. 24). That is, shall be completely and entirely overthrown; shall cease to be inhabited, and shall be perfectly desolate. It does not mean that it shall be overthrown in the same manner as Sodom was, but that it should be as completely and entirely ruined. The successive steps in the overthrow of Babylon, by which this prophecy was so signally fulfilled, were the following: (1.) The taking of the city by Cyrus. This was accomplished by his clearing out the *Pallacopas*, a canal that was made for the purpose of emptying the superfluous waters of the Euphrates into the lakes and marshes formed by it in the south-west borders of the province towards Arabia. Into this canal he directed the waters of the Euphrates, and was thus enabled to enter the city in the channel of the river under the walls (see Notes on ch. xlv. 1, 2). He took the city by surprise, and when the inhabitants, confident of security, had given themselves up to the riot of a grand public festival; and the king and the nobles were revelling at a public entertainment. From this cause, also, it happened that the waters, which were thus diverted from their usual channel, converted the whole country

Isaiah I. 17

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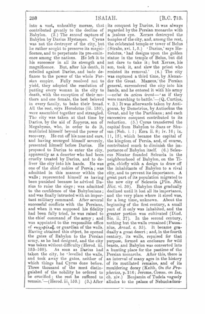

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into a vast, unhealthy morass, that contributed greatly to the decline of Babylon. (2.) The *second* capture of Babylon by Darius Hystaspes. Cyrus was not the destroyer of the city, but he rather sought to preserve its magnificence, and to perpetuate its pre-eminence among the nations. He left it to his successor in all its strength and magnificence. But, after his death, it rebelled against Darius, and bade defiance to the power of the whole Persian empire. Fully resolved not to yield, they adopted the resolution of putting every woman in the city to death, with the exception of their mothers and one female, the best beloved in every family, to bake their bread. All the rest, says Herodotus (iii. 150), were assembled together and strangled. The city was taken at that time by Darius, by the aid of Zopyrus, son of Megabyzus, who, in order to do it, mutilated himself beyond the power of recovery. He cut off his nose and ears, and having scourged himself severely, presented himself before Darius. He proposed to Darius to enter the city, apparently as a deserter who had been cruelly treated by Darius, and to deliver the city into his hands. He was one of the chief nobles of Persia; was admitted in this manner within the walls; represented himself as having been punished because he advised Darius to raise the siege; was admitted to the confidence of the Babylonians; and was finally intrusted with an important military command. After several successful conflicts with the Persians, and when it was supposed his fidelity had been fully tried, he was raised to the chief command of the army; and was appointed to the responsible office of τειχοφύλαξ, or guardian of the walls. Having obtained this object, he opened the gates of Babylon to the Persian army, as he had designed, and the city was taken without difficulty (Herod. iii. 153–160). As soon as Darius had taken the city, he 'levelled the walls, and took away the gates, neither of which things had Cyrus done before. Three thousand of the most distinguished of the nobility he ordered to be crucified; the rest he suffered to remain.'—(Herod. iii. 159.) (3.) After its conquest by Darius, it was always regarded by the Persian monarchs with a jealous eye. Xerxes destroyed the temples of the city, and, among the rest, the celebrated temple or tower of Belus (Strabo, xvi. 1, 5.) 'Darius,' says Herodotus, 'had designs upon the golden statue in the temple of Belus, but did not dare to take it; but Xerxes, his son, took it, and slew the priest who resisted its removal.' (4.) The city was captured a third time, by Alexander the Great. Mazæus, the Persian general, surrendered the city into his hands, and he entered it with his army —*velut in aciem irent*—'as if they were marching to battle.'—(Q. Curtius, v. 3.) It was afterwards taken by Antigonus, by Demetrius, by Antiochus the Great, and by the Parthians; and each successive conquest contributed to its reduction. (5.) Cyrus transferred the capital from Babylon to *Susa* or Shusan (Neh. i. 1; Ezra ii. 8; iv. 16; ix. 11, 15), which became the capital of the kingdom of Persia, and, of course, contributed much to diminish the importance of Babylon itself. (6.) Seleucus Nicator founded Seleucia in the neighbourhood of Babylon, on the Tigris, chiefly with a design to draw off the inhabitants of Babylon to a rival city, and to prevent its importance. A great part of its population migrated to the new city of Seleucia (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* vi. 30). Babylon thus gradually declined until it lost all its importance, and the very place where it stood was, for a long time, unknown. About the beginning of the first century, a small part of it only was inhabited, and the greater portion was cultivated (Diod. Sic. ii. 27). In the second century, nothing but the walls remained (Pausanius, *Arcad.* c. 33). It became gradually a great desert; and, in the fourth century, its walls, repaired for that purpose, formed an enclosure for wild beasts, and Babylon was converted into a hunting place for the pastime of the Persian monarchs. After this, there is an interval of many ages in the history of its mutilated remains, and of its mouldering decay (Keith, *On the Prophecies*, p. 216; Jerome, *Comm. on Isa.* ch. xiv.) Benjamin of Tudela vaguely alludes to the palace of Nebuchadnez-

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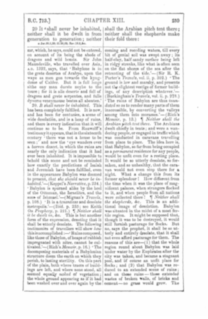

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIII. 259

20 It [a] 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:

[a] Jer. 50.3,39; 51.29,62; Rev. 18.2, &c.

zar, which, he says, could not be entered, on account of its being the abode of dragons and wild beasts. Sir John Maundeville, who travelled over Asia, A.D. 1322, says, that 'Babylone is in the grete desertes of Arabye, upon the waye as men gon towarde the kyngdome of Caldee. But it is full longe sithe ony man durste neyhe to the toure; for it is alle deserte and full of dragons and grete serpentes, and fulle dyverse veneymouse bestes all abouten.'

20. *It shall never be inhabited.* This has been completely fulfilled. It is now, and has been for centuries, a scene of wide desolation, and is a heap of ruins, and there is every indication that it will continue so to be. From Rauwolff's testimony it appears, that in the sixteenth century 'there was not a house to be seen;' and now the 'eye wanders over a *barren desert*, in which the ruins are nearly the only indication that it had ever been inhabited. It is impossible to behold this scene and not be reminded how exactly the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled, even in the appearance Babylon was doomed to present, *that she should never be inhabited*.'—(Keppel's *Narrative*, p. 234.) 'Babylon is spurned alike by the heel of the Ottoman, the Israelites, and the sons of Ishmael.'—(Mignan's *Travels*, p. 108.) 'It is a *tenantless* and desolate metropolis.'—(Ibid. p. 235; see Keith *On Prophecy*, p. 221.) ¶ *Neither shall it be dwelt in, &c.* This is but another form of the expression, denoting that it shall be utterly desolate. The following testimonies of travellers will show *how* this is accomplished:—'Ruins composed, like those of Babylon, of heaps of rubbish impregnated with nitre, cannot be cultivated.'—(Rich's *Memoir*, p. 16.) 'The decomposing materials of a Babylonian structure doom the earth on which they perish, to lasting sterility. On this part of the plain, both where traces of buildings are left, and where none stood, all seemed equally *naked* of vegetation; the whole ground appearing as if it had been washed over and over again by the coming and receding waters, till every bit of genial soil was swept away; its half-clay, half-sandy surface being left in ridgy streaks, like what is often seen on the flat shores of the sea after the retreating of the tide.'—(Sir R. K. Porter's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 392.) 'The ground is low and marshy, and presents not the slightest vestige of former buildings, of any description whatever.'—(Buckingham's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 278.) 'The ruins of Babylon are thus *inundated* so as to render many parts of them inaccessible, by converting the valleys among them into morasses.'—(Rich's *Memoir*, p. 13.) ¶ *Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there.* The Arabians dwelt chiefly in tents; and were a wandering people, or engaged in traffic which was conducted in caravans travelling from place to place. The idea here is, that Babylon, so far from being occupied as a *permanent* residence for any people, would be unfit even for a resting place. It would be so utterly desolate, so forsaken, and so unhealthy, that the caravan would not even stop there for a night. What a change this from its former splendour! How different from the time when it was the place of magnificent palaces, when strangers flocked to it, and when people from all nations were collected there! ¶ *Neither shall the shepherds, &c.* This is an additional image of desolation. Babylon was situated in the midst of a most fertile region. It might be supposed that, though it was to be destroyed, it would still furnish pasturage for flocks. But no, says the prophet, it shall be so utterly and entirely desolate, that it shall not even afford pasturage for them. The reasons of this are—(1) that the whole region round about Babylon was laid under water by the Euphrates after the city was taken, and became a stagnant pool, and of course an unfit place for flocks; and (2) that Babylon was reduced to an extended scene of ruins; and on those ruins—those extended wastes of broken walls, of bricks and cement—no grass would grow. The

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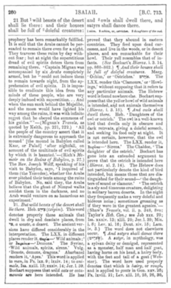

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21 But [1] wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of [2] doleful creatures: and [3] owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

[1] ziim. [2] ochim, or, ostriches. [3] daughters of the owl.

prophecy has been remarkably fulfilled. It is said that the Arabs cannot be persuaded to remain there even for a night. They traverse these ruins by day without fear; but at night the superstitious dread of evil spirits deters them from remaining there. 'Captain Mignan was accompanied by six *Arabs* completely armed, but he "could not induce them to remain towards night, from the apprehension of evil spirits. It is impossible to eradicate this idea from the minds of these people, who are very deeply imbued with superstition. . . And when the sun sunk behind the Mujelibè, and the moon would have lighted his way among the ruins, it was with infinite regret that he obeyed the summons of his guides."'—(Mignan's *Travels*, as quoted by Keith, pp. 221, 222.) 'All the people of the country assert that it is extremely dangerous to approach the mound' [the mound in Babylon called Kasr, or Palad] 'after nightfall, on account of the multitude of evil spirits by which it is haunted.'—(Rich's *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*, p. 27.) The Rev. Joseph Wolff, speaking of his visit to Babylon, says, 'I inquired of them (the Yezeedes), whether the Arabs ever pitched their tents among the ruins of Babylon. No, said they, the Arabs believe that the ghost of Nimrod walks amidst them in the darkness, and no Arab would venture on so hazardous an experiment.'

21. *But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there.* Heb. צִיִּים (*tziyim*). This word denotes properly those animals that dwell in *dry* and desolate places, from צִי, *a waste, a desert.* The ancient versions have differed considerably in the interpretation. The LXX. in different places render it, θηρία—'Wild animals;' or δαιμόνια—'Demons.' The Syriac, 'Wild animals, spirits, sirens.' Vulg. 'Beasts, demons, dragons.' Abarbanel renders it, 'Apes.' This word is applied to *men*, in Ps. lxx. 9; lxxiv. 14; to *animals*, Isa. xxiii. 13; xxxiv. 14; Jer. l. 39. Bochart supposes that *wild cats* or *catamounts* are here intended. He has proved that they abound in eastern countries. They feed upon dead carcasses, and live in the woods, or in desert places, and are remarkable for their howl. Their yell resembles that of infants. (*See* Bochart's *Hieroz.* i. 3. 14. pp. 860–862.) ¶ *And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures.* Marg. 'Ochim,' or 'Ostriches.' אֹחִים. The LXX. render this 'Clamours,' or 'Howlings,' without supposing that it refers to any particular animals. The Hebrew word is found nowhere else. Bochart supposes that the yell or howl of wild animals is intended, and not animals themselves (*Hieroz.* i. 3. 15). ¶ *And owls shall dwell there.* Heb. 'Daughters of the owl or ostrich.' The owl is a well-known bird that dwells only in obscure and dark retreats, giving a doleful screech, and seeking its food only at night. It is not certain, however, that the owl is intended here. The LXX. render it, σειρῆνες—'Sirens.' The Chaldee, 'The daughter of the ostrich.' Bochart has gone into an extended argument to prove that the ostrich is intended here (*Hieroz.* xi. 2. 14). The Hebrew does not particularly denote the kind of bird intended, but means those that are distinguished for their sound—'the daughters of sound or clamour.' 'The ostrich is a sly and timorous creature, delighting in solitary barren deserts. In the night they frequently make a very doleful and hideous noise; sometimes groaning as if they were in the greatest agonies.'—(Shaw's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 348, 8vo; Taylor's *Heb. Con.*; see Job xxx. 29; Isa. xxxiv. 13; xliii. 20; Jer. l. 39; Mic. i. 8; Lev. xi. 16; Deut. xiv. 15; Lam. iv. 3.) The word does not elsewhere occur. ¶ *And satyrs shall dance there* (שְׂעִירִים). A *satyr*, in mythology, was a sylvan deity or demigod, represented as a monster, half man and half goat, having horns on his head, a hairy body, with the feet and tail of a goat (Webster). The word here used properly denotes that which is *hairy*, or *rough*, and is applied to *goats* in Gen. xxv. 25; Ps. lxviii. 21; Lev. xiii. 10, 25, 26, 30,

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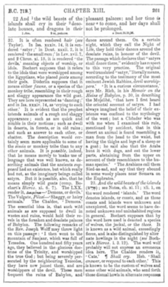

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIII. 261

22 And [1] the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their [2] desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near [a] to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

[1] Iim. [2] or, palaces. [a] Deut. 32. 35, 36.

32. It is often rendered *hair* (*see* Taylor). In Isa. xxxiv. 14, it is rendered 'satyr;' in Deut. xxxii. 2, it is rendered 'the small rain;' in Lev. xvii. 7, and 2 Chron. xi. 15, it is rendered 'the devils,' meaning objects of worship, or idols. Bochart supposes that it refers to the idols that were worshipped among the Egyptians, who placed *goats* among their gods. Döderlin supposes that it means either *fawns*, or a species of the monkey tribe, resembling in their rough and shaggy appearance the wild goat. They are here represented as 'dancing;' and in Isa. xxxiv. 14, as 'crying to each other.' It is evident that the prophet intends animals of a rough and shaggy appearance; such as are quick and nimble in their motions; such as dwell in deserts, in forests, or in old ruins; and such as answer to each other, or chatter. The description would certainly seem more applicable to some of the *simia* or monkey tribe than to any other animals. It is *possible*, indeed, that he means merely to make use of language that was well known, as describing animals that the ancients *supposed* had an existence, but which really had not, as the imaginary beings called satyrs. But it is possible, also, that he means simply wild goats (comp. Bochart's *Hieroz.* xi. 6. 7). The LXX. render it, δαιμόνια—'Demons, or devils.' The Vulgate, *Pilosi*—'Shaggy, or hairy animals.' The Chaldee, 'Demons.' The essential idea is, that such wild animals as are supposed to dwell in wastes and ruins, would hold their revels in the forsaken and desolate palaces of Babylon. The following remarks of the Rev. Joseph Wolff may throw light on this passage: 'I then went to the mountain of Sanjaar, which was full of Yezeedes. One hundred and fifty years ago, they believed in the glorious doctrine of the Trinity, and worshipped the true God; but being severely persecuted by the neighbouring Yezeedes, they have now joined them, and are worshippers of the devil. These men frequent the ruins of Babylon, and dance around them. On a certain night, which they call the Night of Life, they hold their dances around the desolate ruins, in honour of the devil. The passage which declares that "satyrs shall dance there," evidently has respect to this very practice. The original word translated "satyr," literally means, according to the testimony of the most eminent Jewish Rabbins, *devil worshippers.*' 'It is a curious circumstance,' says Mr. Rich, in his *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon*, p. 30, in describing the Mujelibè, 'that here I first heard the oriental account of satyrs. I had always imagined the belief of their existence was confined to the mythology of the west; but a Chôadar who was with me when I examined this ruin, mentioned by accident, that in this desert an animal is found resembling a man from the head to the waist, but having the thighs and legs of a sheep or a goat; he said also that the Arabs hunt it with dogs, and eat the lower parts, abstaining from the upper on account of their resemblance to the human species.' 'The Arabians call them Sied-as-sad, and say that they abound in some woody places near Semava on the Euphrates.'

22. *And the wild beasts of the islands* (אִיִּים); see Notes, ch. xi. 11; xli. 1, on the word rendered 'islands.' The word denotes islands, or coasts, and as those coasts and islands were unknown and unexplored, the word seems to have denoted unknown and uninhabited regions in general. Bochart supposes that by the word here used is denoted a species of wolves, the jackal, or the *thoes.* It is known as a wild animal, exceedingly fierce, and is also distinguished by alternate howlings in the night (*see* Bochart's *Hieroz.* i. 3. 12). The word wolf probably will not express an erroneous idea here. The Chaldee renders it, 'Cats.' ¶ *Shall cry.* Heb. 'Shall *answer*, or *respond* to each other.' This is known to be the custom of wolves and some other wild animals, who send forth those dismal howls in alternate responses

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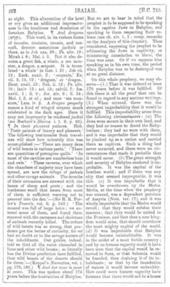

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at night. This alternation of the howl or cry gives an additional impressiveness to the loneliness and desolation of forsaken Babylon. ¶ *And dragons* (תַּנִּים). This word, in its various forms of *tannim, tanninim, tannin,* and *tannoth,* denotes sometimes *jackals* or *thoes,* as in Job xxx. 29; Ps. xliv. 19; Micah i. 8; Mal. i. 3. But it also denotes a great fish, a whale, a sea monster, a dragon, a serpent. It is translated 'a whale' in Gen. i. 21; Job vii. 12; Ezek. xxxii. 2; 'serpents,' Ex. vii. 9, 10, 12; 'dragons,' or 'dragon,' Deut. xxxii. 33; Neh. ii. 13; Ps. xliv. 19; lxxiv. 13; xci. 13; cxlviii. 7; Isa. xxvii. 1; li. 9; Jer. xiv. 6; li. 34; Mal. i. 3, *et al.*; and once 'sea monsters,' Lam. iv. 3. A *dragon* properly means a kind of winged serpent much celebrated in the dark ages. Here it may not improperly be rendered *jackal* (*see* Bochart's *Hieroz.* i. 1. 9, p. 69). ¶ *In their pleasant palaces.* Heb. 'Their palaces of luxury and pleasure.' The following testimonies from travellers will show how minutely this was accomplished:—'There are many dens of wild beasts in various parts.' 'There are quantities of porcupine quills.' 'In most of the cavities are numberless bats and owls.' 'These caverns, over which the chambers of majesty may have been spread, are now the refuge of jackals and other savage animals. The mouths of their entrances are strewed with the bones of sheep and *goats*; and the loathsome smell that issues from most of them is sufficient warning not to proceed into the den.'—(Sir R. K. Porter's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 342.) 'The mound was full of large holes; we entered some of them, and found them strewed with the carcasses and skeletons of animals recently killed. The ordure of wild beasts was so strong, that prudence got the better of curiosity, for we had no doubt as to the savage nature of the inhabitants. Our guides, indeed, told us that all the ruins abounded in lions and other wild beasts; so literally has the Divine prediction been fulfilled, that wild beasts of the deserts should lie there.'—(Keppel's *Narrative*, vol. i. pp. 179, 180.) ¶ *And her time is near to come.* This was spoken about 174 years before the destruction of Babylon. But we are to bear in mind that the prophet is to be supposed to be speaking to the captive Jews in Babylon, and speaking to them respecting their release (see ch. xiv. 1, 2; comp. remarks on the Analysis of this chapter). Thus considered, supposing the prophet to be addressing the Jews in captivity, or ministering consolation to them, the time was near. Or if we suppose him speaking as in his own time, the period when Babylon was to be destroyed was at no great distance.

On this whole prophecy, we may observe—(1.) That it was uttered at least 170 years before it was fulfilled. Of this there is all the proof that can be found in regard to any ancient writings. (2.) When uttered, there was the strongest improbability that it would be fulfilled. This improbability arose from the following circumstances: (*a*) The Jews were secure in their own land, and they had no reason to dread the Babylonians; they had no wars with them, and it was improbable that they would be plucked up as a nation and carried there as captives. Such a thing had never occurred, and there were no circumstances that made it probable that it would occur. (*b*) The great strength and security of Babylon rendered it improbable. It was the capital of the heathen world; and if there was any city that seemed impregnable, it was this. (*c*) It was improbable that it would be overthrown by *the Medes.* Media, at the time when the prophecy was uttered, was a dependent province of Assyria (*Note*, ver. 17), and it was wholly improbable that the Medes would revolt; that they would subdue their masters; that they would be united to the Persians, and that thus a *new* kingdom would arise, that should overthrow the most mighty capital of the world. (*d*) It was improbable that Babylon would become uninhabitable. It was in the midst of a most fertile country; and by no human sagacity could it have been seen that the capital would be removed to Susa, or that Seleucia would be founded, thus draining it of its inhabitants; or that by the inundation of waters it would become unhealthy. How could mere human sagacity have foreseen that there would not be a house

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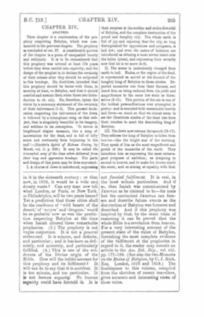

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CHAPTER XIV.

ANALYSIS.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the prophecy respecting Babylon, which was commenced in the previous chapter. The prophecy is concluded at ver. 27. A considerable portion of the chapter is a poem of unequalled beauty and sublimity. It is to be remembered that this prophecy was uttered at least 174 years before they were carried into captivity; and the design of the prophet is, to declare the *certainty of their release* after they should be subjected to this bondage. He, doubtless, intended that this prophecy should be borne with them, in memory at least, to Babylon, and that it should comfort and sustain them when there (see Introduction to ch. xiii). He, therefore, opens the vision by a summary statement of the *certainty of their deliverance* (1-3). This general declaration respecting the deliverance of the Jews, is followed by a triumphant song on that subject, that is singularly beautiful in its imagery, and sublime in its conception. 'It moves in lengthened elegiac measure, like a song of lamentation for the dead, and is full of lofty scorn and contumely from beginning to the end.'—(Herder's *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, by Marsh, vol. ii. p. 206.) It may be called *the triumphal song of the Jews when delivered from their long and oppressive bondage.* The parts and design of this poem may be thus expressed:

I. A chorus of Jews is introduced, expressing their surprise at the sudden and entire downfall of Babylon, and the complete destruction of the proud and haughty city. The whole earth is full of joy and rejoicing that the city, so long distinguished for oppressions and arrogance, is laid low; and even *the cedars* of Lebanon are introduced as uttering a most severe taunt over the fallen tyrant, and expressing their security now that he is no more (4-8).

II. The scene is immediately changed from earth to hell. Hades, or the region of the dead, is represented as moved at the descent of the haughty king of Babylon to those abodes. Departed monarchs rise from their thrones, and insult him on being reduced from his pride and magnificence to the same low state as themselves (9-11). This portion of the ode is one of the boldest personifications ever attempted in poetry: and is executed with remarkable brevity and force—so much so that we almost seem to *see* the illustrious shades of the dead rise from their couches to meet the descending king of Babylon.

III. The Jews now resume the speech (12-17). They address the king of Babylon as fallen from heaven—like the bright star of the morning. They speak of him as the most magnificent and proud of the monarchs of the earth. They introduce him as expressing the most extravagant purposes of ambition; as designing to ascend to heaven, and to make his throne above the stars; and as aiming at equality with God.

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in it in the sixteenth century; or that now, in 1839, it would be a wide and dreary waste? Can any man now tell what London, or Paris, or New York, or Philadelphia, will be two years hence? Yet a prediction that those cities shall be the residence of 'wild beasts of the desert,' of 'satyrs' and 'dragons,' would be as probable now as was the prediction respecting Babylon at the time when Isaiah uttered these remarkable prophecies. (3.) The prophecy is not vague conjecture. It is not a *general* statement. It is minute, and definite, and particular; and it has been as definitely, and minutely, and particularly fulfilled. (4.) This is one of the evidences of the Divine origin of the Bible. How will the infidel account for this prophecy and its fulfilment? It will not do to say that it is *accident.* It is too minute, and too particular. It is not *human sagacity.* No human sagacity could have foretold it. It is not *fancied fulfilment.* It is real, in the most minute particulars. And if so, then Isaiah was commissioned by JEHOVAH as he claimed to be—for none but the omniscient JEHOVAH can foresee and describe future events as the destruction of Babylon was foreseen and described. And if *this* prophecy was inspired by God, by the same train of reasoning it can be proved that the whole Bible is a revelation from heaven. For a very interesting account of the present state of the ruins of Babylon, furnishing the most complete evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecies in regard to it, the reader may consult an article in the *Am. Bib. Rep.*, vol. viii. pp. 177-189. (See also the two *Memoirs on the Ruins of Babylon*, by C. J. Rich, Esq. London, 1816 and 1818.) The frontispiece to this volume, compiled from the sketches of recent travellers, gives accurate and interesting views of those ruins.

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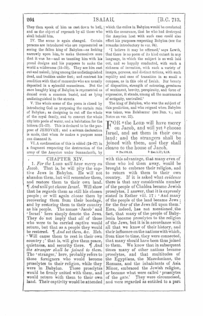

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They then speak of him as cast down to hell, and as the object of reproach by all those who shall behold him.

IV. The scene is again changed. Certain persons are introduced who are represented as seeing the fallen king of Babylon—as looking narrowly upon him, to make themselves sure that it was he—and as taunting him with his proud designs and his purposes to make the world a wilderness (15-20). They see him cast out and naked; lying among the undistinguished dead, and trodden under feet; and contrast his condition with that of monarchs who are usually deposited in a splendid mausoleum. But the once haughty king of Babylon is represented as denied even a common burial, and as lying undistinguished in the streets.

V. The whole scene of the poem is closed by introducing God as purposing the certain ruin of Babylon; as designing to cut off the whole of the royal family, and to convert the whole city into pools of water, and a habitation for the bittern (21-23). This is declared to be the purpose of JEHOVAH; and a solemn declaration is made, that when *he* makes a purpose none can disannul it.

VI. A confirmation of this is added (24-27) in a fragment respecting the destruction of the army of the Assyrian under Sennacherib, by which the exiles in Babylon would be comforted with the assurance, that he who had destroyed the Assyrian host with such ease could also effect his purposes respecting Babylon (see the remarks introductory to ver. 24).

'I believe it may be affirmed,' says Lowth, 'that there is no poem of its kind extant in any language, in which the subject is so well laid out, and so happily conducted, with such a richness of invention, with such a variety of images, persons, and distinct actions, with such rapidity and ease of transition in so small a compass, as in this ode of Isaiah. For beauty of disposition, strength of colouring, greatness of sentiment, brevity, perspicuity, and force of expression, it stands, among all the monuments of antiquity, unrivalled.'

The king of Babylon, who was the subject of this prediction, and who reigned when Babylon was taken, was Belshazzar (see Dan. v.; and Notes on ver. 22).

FOR [a] the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet [b] 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.

a Ps.102.13. b Zec.1.17; 2.12.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. *For the* LORD *will have mercy on Jacob.* That is, he will pity the captive Jews in Babylon. He will not abandon them, but will remember them, and restore them to their own land. ¶ *And will yet choose Israel.* Will show that he regards them as still his chosen people; or will again *choose* them by recovering them from their bondage, and by restoring them to their country as his people. The names 'Jacob' and 'Israel' here simply denote the Jews. They do not imply that *all* of those who were to be carried captive would return, but that as a people they would be restored. ¶ *And set them, &c.* Heb. 'Will cause them to rest in their own country;' that is, will give them peace, quietness, and security there. ¶ *And the stranger shall be joined to them.* The 'stranger,' here, probably refers to those foreigners who would become proselytes to their religion, while they were in Babylon. Those proselytes would be firmly united with them, and would return with them to their own land. Their captivity would be attended with this advantage, that many even of those who led them away, would be brought to embrace their religion, and to return with them to their own country. If it is asked what *evidence* there is that any considerable number of the people of Chaldea became Jewish proselytes, I answer, that it is expressly stated in Esther viii. 17: 'And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.' Ezra, indeed, has not mentioned the fact, that many of the people of Babylonia became proselytes to the religion of the Jews, but it is in accordance with all that we know of their history, and their influence on the nations with which, from time to time, they were connected, that many should have been thus joined to them. We know that in subsequent times many of other nations became proselytes, and that multitudes of the Egyptians, the Macedonians, the Romans, and the inhabitants of Asia Minor, embraced the Jewish religion, or became what were called 'proselytes of the gate.' They were circumcised, and were regarded as entitled to a part

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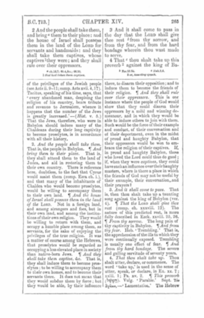

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2 And the people shall take them, and bring [a] them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives [1] they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

a ch.18.7; 60.4,&c.; 66.20. 1 that had taken them captives.

3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest [b] from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

4 That [c] thou shalt take up this proverb [2] against the king of Ba-

b Eze.28.24. c Hab.2.6. 2 or, taunting speech.

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of the privileges of the Jewish people (see Acts ii. 9-11; comp. Acts xvii. 4, 17). Tacitus, speaking of his time, says, that 'every abandoned man, despising the religion of his country, bears tribute and revenue to Jerusalem, whence it happens that the number of the Jews is greatly increased.'—(*Hist.* v. 5.) That the Jews, therefore, who were in Babylon should induce many of the Chaldeans during their long captivity to become proselytes, is in accordance with all their history.

2. *And the people shall take them.* That is, the people in Babylon. ¶ *And bring them to their place.* That is, they shall attend them to the land of Judea, and aid in restoring them to their own country. There is reference here, doubtless, to the fact that Cyrus would assist them (comp. Ezra ch. i.), and that many of the inhabitants of Chaldea who would become proselytes, would be willing to accompany them to their own land. ¶ *And the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the* LORD. Not in a foreign land, and among strangers and foes, but in their own land, and among the institutions of their own religion. They would be willing to return with them, and occupy a humble place among them, as servants, for the sake of enjoying the privileges of the true religion. It was a matter of course among the Hebrews, that proselytes would be regarded as occupying a less elevated place in society than native-born Jews. ¶ *And they shall take them captive, &c.* That is, they shall induce them to become proselytes: to be willing to accompany them to their own homes, and to become their servants there. It does not mean that they would subdue them by force; but they would be able, by their influence there, to disarm their opposition; and to induce them to become the friends of their religion. ¶ *And they shall rule over their oppressors.* This is one instance where the people of God would show that they could disarm their oppressors by a mild and winning demeanour, and in which they would be able to induce others to join with them. Such would be the force of their example and conduct, of their conversation and of their deportment, even in the midst of proud and haughty Babylon, that their oppressors would be won to embrace the religion of their captives. If, in proud and haughty Babylon, those who loved the Lord could thus do good; if, when they were *captives*, they could have such an influence over their haughty masters, where is there a place in which the friends of God may not be useful by their example, their conversation, and their prayers?

3. *And it shall come to pass.* That is, then thou shalt take up a taunting song against the king of Babylon (ver. 4). ¶ *That the* LORD *shall give thee rest* (comp. ch. xxxviii. 12). The nature of this predicted rest, is more fully described in Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26. ¶ *From thy sorrow.* The long pain of thy captivity in Babylon. ¶ *And from thy fear.* Heb. 'Trembling.' That is, the apprehension of the ills to which they were continually exposed. Trembling is usually one effect of fear. ¶ *And from thy hard bondage.* The severe and galling servitude of seventy years.

4. *That thou shalt take up.* Thou shalt utter, declare, or commence. The word 'take up,' is used in the sense of utter, speak, or declare, in Ex. xx. 7; xxiii. 1; Ps. xv. 2. ¶ *This proverb* ([illegible]). Vulg. 'Parable.' Sept. Τὸν θρῆνον,—'Lamentation.' The Hebrew

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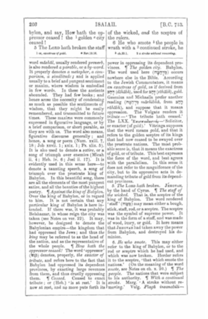

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bylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the [1]golden [a]city ceased!

5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.

6 He who smote [b]the people in wrath with a [2]continued stroke, he

1 or, *exactress of gold.* a Rev.18.16. b ch.33.1. 2 *a stroke without removing.*

word *mâshâl*, usually rendered *proverb*, is also rendered *a parable*, or *a by-word*. It properly denotes *a metaphor*, *a comparison*, *a similitude*; and is applied usually to a brief and pungent sentiment or maxim, where wisdom is embodied in few words. In these the ancients abounded. They had few books; and hence arose the necessity of condensing as much as possible the sentiments of wisdom, that they might be easily remembered, and transmitted to future times. These maxims were commonly expressed in figurative language, or by a brief comparison, or short parable, as they are with us. The word also means, figurative discourse generally; and hence, a song or poem (Num. xxiii. 7, 18; Job xxvii. 1; xxix. 1; Ps. xlix. 5). It is also used to denote a *satire*, or a song of triumph over enemies (Micah ii. 4; Heb. iv. 6; Joel ii. 17). It is evidently used in this sense here—to denote a taunting speech, a song of triumph over the prostrate king of Babylon. In this beautiful song, there are all the elements of the most pungent satire, and all the beauties of the highest poetry. ¶ *Against the king of Babylon.* Over the king of Babylon, or in regard to him. It is not certain that any particular king of Babylon is here intended. If there was, it was probably Belshazzar, in whose reign the city was taken (see Notes on ver. 22). It may, however, be designed to denote the Babylonian empire—the kingdom that had oppressed the Jews; and thus *the king* may be referred to as the head of the nation, and as the representative of the whole people. ¶ *How hath the oppressor ceased!* The word 'oppressor' (נֹגֵשׂ) denotes, properly, *the exactor of tribute*, and refers here to the fact that Babylon had oppressed its dependent provinces, by exacting large revenues from them, and thus cruelly oppressing them. ¶ *Ceased.* Ceased to exact tribute; or (Heb.) 'is at rest.' It is now at rest, and no more puts forth its power in oppressing its dependent provinces. ¶ *The golden city.* Babylon. The word used here (מַדְהֵבָה) occurs nowhere else in the Bible. According to the Jewish Commentators, it means *an exactress of gold*, as if derived from דְּהַב (*dĕhăbh*), used for זָהָב (*zâhâbh*), gold. Gesenius and Michaelis prefer another reading (מַרְהֵבָה *marhêbhâ*, from רָהַב *râhăbh*), and suppose that it means oppression. The Vulgate renders it *tribute*—'The tribute hath ceased.' The LXX. 'Ἐπισπουδαστής—'Solicitor, or exactor (of gold).' Vitringa supposes that the word means *gold*, and that it refers to the golden sceptre of its kings that had now ceased to be swayed over the prostrate nations. The most probable sense is, that it means the exactress of gold, or of tribute. This best expresses the force of the word, and best agrees with the parallelism. In this sense it does not refer to the magnificence of the city, but to its oppressive acts in demanding tribute of gold from its dependent provinces.

5. *The Lord hath broken.* JEHOVAH, by the hand of Cyrus. ¶ *The staff of the wicked.* That is, the sceptre of the king of Babylon. The word rendered 'staff' (מַטֵּה) may mean either a bough, stick, staff, rod, or a sceptre. The sceptre was the symbol of supreme power. It was in the form of a staff, and was made of wood, ivory, or gold. It here means that JEHOVAH had taken away the power from Babylon, and destroyed his dominion.

6. *He who smote.* This may either refer to the king of Babylon, or to the rod or sceptre which he had used, and which was now broken. Herder refers it to the sceptre, 'that which smote the nations.' (On the meaning of the word *smote*, see Notes on ch. x. 20.) ¶ *The people.* The nations that were subject to his authority. ¶ *With a continual stroke.* Marg. 'A stroke without removing.' Vulg. *Plagâ insanabili*—

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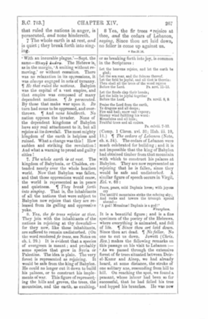

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that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth.

7 The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet; they break forth into singing.

8 Yea, the fir trees [a]rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

a Eze.31.16.

'With an incurable plague.'—Sept. the same—Πληγῇ ἀνιάτῳ. The Hebrew is, as in the margin, 'A smiting without removing,' or without cessation. There was no relaxation in its oppressions, it was *always* engaged in acts of tyranny. ¶ *He that ruled the nations.* Babylon was the capital of a vast empire, and that empire was composed of many dependent nations. ¶ *Is persecuted.* By those that make war upon it. *Its* turn had come to be oppressed, and overthrown. ¶ And *none hindereth.* No nation opposes the invader. None of the dependent kingdoms of Babylon have any real attachment to it, but all rejoice at its downfall. The most mighty kingdom of the earth is helpless and ruined. What a change was this! How sudden and striking the revolution! And what a warning to proud and guilty cities!

7. *The whole earth is at rest.* The kingdom of Babylonia, or Chaldea, extended nearly over the whole heathen world. Now that Babylon was fallen, and that those oppressions would cease, the world is represented as in peace and quietness. ¶ *They break forth into singing.* That is, the inhabitants of all the nations that were subject to Babylon now rejoice that they are released from its galling and oppressive yoke.

8. *Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee.* They join with the inhabitants of the nations in rejoicing at thy downfall—for they now, like those inhabitants, are suffered to remain undisturbed. (On the word rendered *fir trees*, see Notes on ch. i. 29.) It is evident that a species of evergreen is meant; and probably some species that grew in Syria or Palestine. The idea is plain. The very forest is represented as rejoicing. It would be safe from the king of Babylon. He could no longer cut it down to build his palaces, or to construct his implements of war. This figure of representing the hills and groves, the trees, the mountains, and the earth, as exulting, or as breaking forth into joy, is common in the Scriptures:

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein:
Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
Before the Lord. Ps. xcvi. 11-13.

Let the floods clap their hands;
Let the hills be joyful together
Before the Lord. Ps. xcviii. 8, 9.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps;
Fire and hail; snow and vapour;
Stormy wind fulfilling his word:
Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars.
Ps. cxlviii. 7-12.

(Comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 31; Hab. iii. 10, 11.) ¶ *The cedars of Lebanon* (Note, ch. x. 34). The cedars of Lebanon were much celebrated for building; and it is not impossible that the king of Babylon had obtained timber from that mountain with which to construct his palaces at Babylon. They are now represented as rejoicing that he is fallen, since they would be safe and undisturbed. A similar figure of speech occurs in Virgil, *Ecl.* v. 68:

Peace, peace, mild Daphnis loves; with joyous cry
The untill'd mountains strike the echoing sky;
And rocks and towers the triumph spread abroad—
'A god! Menalcas! Daphnis is a god!'
Wrangham.

It is a beautiful figure; and is a fine specimen of the poetry of the Hebrews, where everything is animated, and full of life. ¶ *Since thou art laid down.* Since thou art dead. ¶ *No feller.* No one to cut us down. Jowett (*Chris. Res.*) makes the following remarks on this passage on his visit to Lebanon:—'As we passed through the extensive forest of fir trees situated between Deir-el-Kamr and Ainep, we had already heard, at some distance, the stroke of one solitary axe, resounding from hill to hill. On reaching the spot, we found a peasant, whose labour had been so far successful, that he had felled his tree and lopped his branches. He was now

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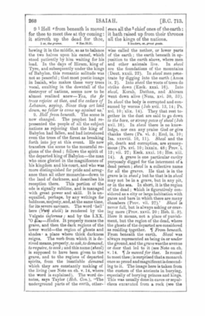

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9 [1]Hell [a]from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the [2]chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

1 or, *the grave.* a Eze.32.21. 2 *leaders*, or, *great goats.*

hewing it in the middle, so as to balance the two halves upon his camel, which stood patiently by him waiting for his load. In the days of Hiram, king of Tyre, and subsequently under the kings of Babylon, this romantic solitude was not so peaceful; that most poetic image in Isaiah, who makes these very trees vocal, exulting in the downfall of the destroyer of nations, seems now to be almost realized anew—*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.*'

9. *Hell from beneath.* The scene is now changed. The prophet had represented the people of all the subject nations as rejoicing that the king of Babylon had fallen, and had introduced even the trees of the forest as breaking forth into joy at this event. He now transfers the scene to the mournful regions of the dead; follows the spirit of the departed king of Babylon—the man who once gloried in the magnificence of his kingdom and his court, and who was more distinguished for pride and arrogance than all other monarchs—down to the land of darkness, and describes his reception there. This portion of the ode is signally sublime, and is managed with great power and skill. It is unequalled, perhaps, by any writings for boldness, majesty, and, at the same time, for its severe sarcasm. The word 'hell' here (שְׁאוֹל *sheôl*) is rendered by the Vulgate *infernus*; and by the LXX. 'Ο ᾅδης—*Hades.* It properly means the grave, and then the dark regions of the lower world—the region of ghosts and shades: a place where thick darkness reigns. The verb from which it is derived means, properly, *to ask, to demand, to require, to seek*; and this name (*sheol*) is supposed to have been given to the grave, and to the regions of departed spirits, from the insatiable *demand* which they are constantly making of the living (see Note on ch. v. 14, where the word is explained). The word denotes, says Taylor (*Heb. Con.*), "The underground parts of the earth, otherwise called the nether, or lower parts of the earth; the earth beneath in opposition to the earth above, where men and other animals live. In *sheol* are the foundations of the mountains (Deut. xxxii. 22). In *sheol* men penetrate by digging into the earth (Amos ix. 2). Into *sheol* the roots of trees do strike down (Ezek. xxxi. 16). Into *sheol*, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram went down alive (Num. xvi. 30, 33). In *sheol* the body is corrupted and consumed by worms (Job xvii. 13, 14; Ps. xvi. 10; xlix. 14). They that rest together in the dust are said to go down *to the bars, or strong gates of sheol* (Job xvii. 16). In *sheol* there is no knowledge, nor can any praise God or give thanks there (Ps. vi. 5; Eccl. ix. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11). *Sheol* and the pit, death and corruption, are synonymous (Ps. xvi. 10; lxxxix. 48; Prov. i. 12; vii. 27; Ezek. xxxi. 16; Hos. xiii. 14). A grave is one particular cavity purposely digged for the interment of a dead person; *sheol* is a collective name for all the graves. He that is in the grave is in *sheol*; but he that is in *sheol* may not be in a grave, but in any pit, or in the sea. In short, it is the region of the dead; which is figuratively considered as a city or large habitation with gates and bars in which there are many chambers (Prov. vii. 27).' *Sheol* is never full, but is always asking or craving more (Prov. xxvii. 20; Heb. ii. 5). Here it means, not a place of punishment, but the region of the dead, where the ghosts of the departed are considered as residing together. ¶ *From beneath.* From beneath the earth. *Sheol* was always represented as being *in* or *under* the ground, and the grave was the avenue or door that led to it (see Note on ch. v. 14. ¶ *Is moved for thee.* Is roused to meet thee; is surprised that a monarch once so proud and magnificent is descending to it. The image here is taken from the custom of the ancients in burying, especially of burying princes and kings. This was usually done in caves or sepulchres excavated from a rock (see the

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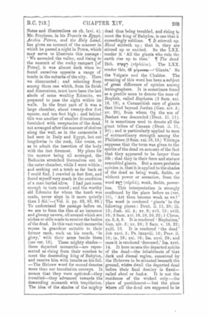

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIV. 269

Notes and illustrations on ch. lxvi. 4). Mr. Stephens, in his *Travels in Egypt, Arabia Petrea, and the Holy Land*, has given an account of the manner in which he passed a night in Petra, which may serve to illustrate this passage: 'We ascended the valley, and rising to the summit of the rocky rampart [of Petra], it was almost dark when we found ourselves opposite a range of tombs in the suburbs of the city. Here we dismounted; and selecting from among them one which, from its finish and dimensions, must have been the last abode of some wealthy Edomite, we prepared to pass the night within its walls. In the front part of it was a large chamber, about twenty-five feet square, and ten feet high; and behind this was another of smaller dimensions, furnished with receptacles of the dead, not arranged after the manner of shelves along the wall, as in the catacombs I had seen in Italy and Egypt, but cut lengthwise in the rock, like ovens, so as to admit the insertion of the body with the feet foremost. My plans for the morrow being all arranged, the Bedouins stretched themselves out in the outer chamber, while I went within; and seeking out a tomb as far back as I could find, I crawled in feet first, and found myself very much in the condition of a man buried alive. I had just room enough to turn round; and the worthy old Edomite for whom the tomb was made, never slept in it more quietly than I did.'—(Vol. ii. pp. 82, 83, 86.) To understand the passage before us, we are to form the idea of an immense and gloomy cavern, all around which are niches or cells made to receive the bodies of the dead. In this vast vault monarchs repose in grandeur suitable to their former rank, each on his couch, 'in glory,' with their arms beside them (see ver. 18). These mighty shades—these departed monarchs—are represented as rising from their couches to meet the descending king of Babylon, and receive him with insults on his fall.—The Hebrew word for *moved* denotes more than our translation conveys. It means that they were *agitated*—they *trembled*—they advanced towards the descending monarch with trepidation. The idea of the shades of the mighty dead thus being troubled, and rising to meet the king of Babylon, is one that is exceedingly sublime. ¶ *It stirreth up. Sheol* stirreth up; that is, they are stirred up or excited. So the LXX. render it 'All the giants who rule the earth rise up to thee.' ¶ *The dead.* Heb. רְפָאִים (*rĕphāim*). The LXX. render this, Οἱ γίγαντες—'Giants.' So the Vulgate and the Chaldee. The meaning of this word has been a subject of great difference of opinion among lexicographers. It is sometimes found as a gentile noun to denote the sons of Raphah, called *Rephaim* (2 Sam. xxi. 16, 18), a Canaanitish race of giants that lived beyond Jordan (Gen. xiv. 5; xv. 20), from whom Og the son of Bashan was descended (Deut. iii. 11). It is sometimes used to denote all the giant tribes of Canaan (Deut. ii. 11, 20); and is particularly applied to men of extraordinary strength among the Philistines (2 Sam. xxi. 16, 18.) Vitringa supposes that the term was given to the spirits of the dead on account of the fact that they appeared to be *larger* than life; that they in their form and stature resembled giants. But a more probable opinion is, that it is applied to the shades of the dead as being weak, feeble, or without power or sensation, from the word רָפָה (*rāphā*), weak, feeble, powerless. This interpretation is strongly confirmed by the place before us (ver. 10), 'Art thou become weak as we?' The word is rendered 'giants' in the following places: Deut. ii. 11, 20; iii. 13; Josh. xii. 4; xv. 8; xvii. 15; xviii. 16; 2 Sam. xxi. 16, 18, 20, 22; 1 Chron. xx. 5, 6, 8. It is rendered 'Rephaims,' Gen. xiv. 5; xv. 20; 2 Sam. v. 18, 22; xxiii. 13. It is rendered 'the dead' Job xxvi. 5; Ps. lxxxviii. 10; Prov. ii. 18; ix. 18; xxi. 16; Isa. xxvi. 29; and once it is rendered 'deceased,' Isa. xxvi. 14. It here means the departed spirits of the dead—the inhabitants of that dark and dismal region, conceived by the Hebrews to be situated beneath the ground, where dwell the departed dead before their final destiny is fixed—called *sheol* or *hades*. It is not the residence of the wicked only—the place of punishment—but the place where *all* the dead are supposed to be

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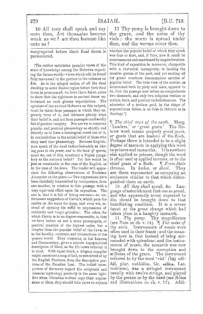

270 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

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.

congregated before their final doom is pronounced.

[The author entertains peculiar views of the state of knowledge among the Hebrews regarding the future world—views which will be found fully canvassed in the preface to the volumes on Job. As to the alleged notion of *all* the dead dwelling in some dismal region before their final doom is pronounced, we have there taken pains to show that the righteous in ancient times entertained no such gloomy expectations. The opinions of the ancient Hebrews on this subject, must be taken from passages in which they expressly treat of it, and intimate plainly what their belief is, and not from passages confessedly full of poetical imagery. Nor are we to construe popular and poetical phraseology so strictly and literally as to form a theological creed out of it, in contradiction to the actual belief of those who daily used that phraseology. Because Englishmen speak of the dead *indiscriminately* as having *gone to the grave, and to the land of spirits*, must we, out of this, construct a Popish purgatory as the national belief? Yet this would be just as reasonable in the case of the English, as in the case of the Jews. The reader will appreciate the following observations of Professor Alexander on the place:—'Two expressions have been faithfully transcribed by interpreters, from one another, in relation to this passage, with a very equivocal effect upon its exposition. The one is, that it is full of biting sarcasm—an unfortunate suggestion of Calvin's, which puts the reader on the scent for irony, and even wit, instead of opening his mind to impressions of sublimity and tragic grandeur. The other, for which Calvin is in no degree responsible, is, that we have before us not a mere prosopopeia, or poetical creation of the highest order, but a chapter from the popular belief of the Jews, as to the locality, contents, and transactions of the unseen world. Thus Gesenius, in his Lexicon and Commentary, gives a minute topographical description of *Sheol*, as the Hebrews believed it to exist. With equal truth, a diligent compiler might construct a map of hell, as conceived of by the English Puritans, from the descriptive portions of the Paradise Lost. The infidel interpreters of Germany regard the scriptural and classical mythology precisely in the same light. But when Christian writers copy their expressions or ideas, they should take pains to explain whether the popular belief of which they speak was true or false, and, if false, how it could be countenanced and sanctioned by inspired writers. This kind of exposition is, moreover, chargeable with a rhetorical incongruity, in lauding the creative genius of the poet, and yet making all his grand creations commonplace articles of popular belief. The true view of the matter, as determined both by piety and taste, appears to be, that the passage now before us comprehends two elements, and only two religious verities or certain facts, and poetical embellishments. The admission of a *tertium quid*, in the shape of superstitious fables, is as false in rhetoric as in theology.']

¶ *The chief ones of the earth.* Marg. 'Leaders,' or 'great goats.' The Hebrew word means properly *great goats*, or goats that are leaders of the flock. Perhaps there is intended to be a slight degree of sarcasm in applying this word to princes and monarchs. It is nowhere else applied to princes, though the word is often used or applied to *rams*, or to the chief goats of a flock. ¶ *From their thrones.* In *hades*, or *sheol*. They are there represented as occupying an eminence similar to that which distinguished them on earth.

10. *All they shall speak*, &c. Language of astonishment that one so proud, and who apparently never expected to die, should be brought down to that humiliating condition. It is a severe taunt at the great change which had taken place in a haughty monarch.

11. *Thy pomp.* Thy magnificence (see Note on ch. v. 14). ¶ *The noise of thy viols.* Instruments of music were often used in their feasts; and the meaning here is, that instead of being surrounded with splendour, and the instruments of music, the monarch was now brought down to the corruption and stillness of the grave. The instrument referred to by the word 'viol' (נֵבֶל *nēbhĕl*, plur. *nebhâlim*, Gr. νάβλα, Lat. *nablium*), was a stringed instrument usually with twelve strings, and played by the pecten or by the hand (see Notes and Illustrations on ch. v. 12). Addi-

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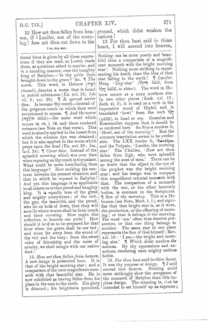

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIV. 271

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O [1] Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,

[1] or, day star.

tional force is given by all these expressions if they are read, as Lowth reads them, as questions asked in suprise, and in a taunting manner, over the haughty king of Babylon—'Is thy pride then brought down to the grave?' &c. ¶ *The worm.* This word, in Hebrew (רִמָּה *rimmâ*), denotes a worm that is found in putrid substances (Ex. xvi. 25; Job vii. 5; xxi. 26). ¶ *Is spread under thee.* Is become thy couch—instead of the gorgeous couch on which thou wert accustomed to repose. ¶ *And the worm* (תּוֹלֵעָה *tōlēā*)—the same word which occurs in ch. i. 18, and there rendered *crimson* (see Note on that verse). This word is usually applied to the insect from which the crimson dye was obtained; but it is also applied to the worm which preys upon the dead (Ex. xvi. 20; Isa. lxvi. 24). ¶ *Cover thee.* Instead of the splendid covering which was over thee when reposing on thy couch in thy palace. What could be more humiliating than this language? How striking the contrast between his present situation and that in which he reposed in Babylon! And yet this language is as applicable to all others as to that proud and haughty king. It is equally true of the great and mighty everywhere; of the rich, the gay, the beautiful, and the proud, who lie on beds of down, that they will soon lie where worms shall be their couch and their covering. How ought this reflection to humble our pride! How should it lead us to be prepared for that hour when the grave shall be our bed; and when far away from the sound of the viol and the harp; from the sweet voice of friendship and the noise of revelry, we shall mingle with our native dust!

12. *How art thou fallen from heaven.* A new image is presented here. It is that of the bright morning star; and a comparison of the once magnificent monarch with that beautiful star. He is now exhibited as having fallen from his place in the east to the earth. His glory is dimmed; his brightness quenched. Nothing can be more poetic and beautiful than a comparison of a magnificent monarch with the bright morning star! Nothing more striking in representing his death, than the idea of that star falling to the earth! ¶ *Lucifer.* Marg. 'Day-star' (הֵילֵל *hêlēl*, from הָלַל *hâlăl, to shine*). The word in Hebrew occurs as a noun nowhere else. In two other places (Ezek. xxi. 12; Zech. xi. 2), it is used as a verb in the imperative mood of Hiphil, and is translated 'howl' from the verb יָלַל (*yâlăl*), *to howl or cry*. Gesenius and Rosenmüller suppose that it should be so rendered here. So Noyes renders it, 'Howl, son of the morning!' But the common translation seems to be preferable. The LXX. render it, Ἑωσφόρος, and the Vulgate, 'Lucifer, the morning star.' The Chaldee, 'How art thou fallen from high, who wert splendid among the sons of men.' There can be no doubt that the object in the eye of the prophet was the bright morning star; and his design was to compare this magnificent oriental monarch with that. The comparison of a monarch with the sun, or the other heavenly bodies, is common in the Scriptures. ¶ *Son of the morning.* This is a Hebraism (see Note, Matt. i. 1), and signifies that that bright star is, as it were, the production, or the offspring of morning; or that it *belongs to* the morning. The word 'son' often thus denotes *possession*, or that one thing belongs to another. The same star in one place represents the Son of God himself; Rev. xxii. 16: 'I am—the bright and morning star.' ¶ *Which didst weaken the nations.* By thy oppressions and exactions, rendering once mighty nations feeble.

13. *For thou hast said in thine heart.* It was thy purpose or design. ¶ *I will ascend into heaven.* Nothing could more strikingly show the arrogance of the monarch of Babylon than this impious design. The meaning is, that he intended to set himself up as supreme;

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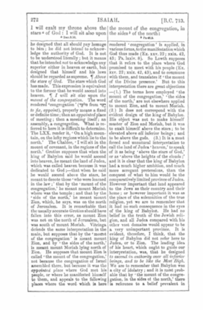

I will exalt my throne above the stars[a] of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides[b] of the north:

[a] Dan.8.10. [b] Ps.48.2.

he designed that all should pay homage to him; he did not intend to acknowledge the authority of God. It is not to be understood literally; but it means that he intended not to acknowledge any superior either in heaven or earth, but designed that himself and his laws should be regarded as supreme. ¶ *Above the stars of God.* The stars which God has made. This expression is equivalent to the former that he would ascend into heaven. ¶ *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation.* The word rendered 'congregation' (מוֹעֵד from יָעַד *to fix, appoint*), properly means a fixed or definite time; then an *appointed* place of meeting; then a meeting itself; an assembly, a congregation. What is referred to here it is difficult to determine. The LXX. render it, 'On a high mountain, on the lofty regions which lie to the north.' The Chaldee, 'I will sit in the mount of covenant, in the regions of the north.' Grotius supposes that when the king of Babylon said he would ascend into heaven, he meant the land of Judea, which was called heaven because it was dedicated to God;—that when he said he would ascend above the stars, he meant to denote those 'who were learned in the law;' that by the 'mount of the congregation,' he meant mount Moriah where was the temple; and that by the 'side of the north,' he meant mount Zion, which, he says, was on the north of Jerusalem. It is remarkable that the usually accurate Grotius should have fallen into this error, as mount Zion was not on the north of Jerusalem, but was south of mount Moriah. Vitringa defends the same interpretation in the main, but supposes that by the 'mount of the congregation' is meant mount Zion, and by 'the sides of the north,' is meant mount Moriah lying north of Zion. He supposes that mount Zion is called 'the mount of the congregation,' not because the congregation of Israel assembled there, but because it was the *appointed place* where God met his people, or where he manifested himself to them, and appeals to the following places where the word which is here rendered 'congregation' is applied, in various forms, to the manifestation which God thus made (Ex. xxv. 22; xxix. 42, 43; Ps. lxxiv. 8). So Lowth supposes that it refers to the place where God promised to meet with his people (Ex. xxv. 22; xxix. 42, 43), and to commune with them, and translates it 'the mount of the Divine presence.' But to this interpretation there are great objections—(1.) The terms here employed 'the mount of the congregation,' 'the sides of the north,' are not elsewhere applied to mount Zion, and to mount Moriah. (2.) It does not correspond with the evident design of the king of Babylon. His object was not to make himself master of Zion and Moriah, but it was to exalt himself above the stars; to be elevated above *all* inferior beings; and to be above the gods. (3.) It is a most forced and unnatural interpretation to call the land of Judea 'heaven,' to speak of it as being 'above the stars of God,' or as 'above the heights of the clouds;' and it is clear that the king of Babylon had a much higher ambition, and much more arrogant pretensions, than the conquest of what to him would be the comparatively limited province of Judea. However important that land appeared to the Jews as their country and their home; or however important it was as the place of the solemnities of the true religion, yet we are to remember that it had no such consequence in the eyes of the king of Babylon. He had no belief in the truth of the Jewish religion, and all Judea compared with his other vast domains would appear to be a very unimportant province. It is evident, therefore, I think, that the king of Babylon did not refer here to Judea, or to Zion. The leading idea of his heart, which ought to guide our interpretation, was, that he designed *to ascend in authority over all inferior beings, and to be like the Most High.* We are to remember that Babylon was a city of idolatry; and it is most probable that by 'the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north,' there is reference to a belief prevalent in

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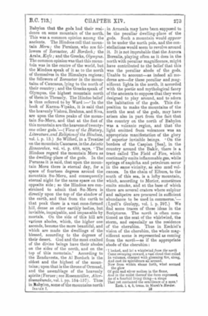

Babylon that the gods had their residence on some mountain of the north. This was a common opinion among the ancients. The Hindoos call that mountain *Meru;* the Persians, who are followers of Zoroaster, *Al Bordsch;* the Arabs, *Kafe;* and the Greeks, *Olympus.* The common opinion was that this mountain was in the centre of the world, but the Hindoos speak of it as to the north of themselves in the Himalaya regions; the followers of Zoroaster in the mountains of Caucasus, lying to the north of their country; and the Greeks speak of Olympus, the highest mountain north of them in Thessaly. The Hindoo belief is thus referred to by Ward:—'In the book of Karma-Vipaka, it is said that the heavenly Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva, are upon the three peaks of the mountain Su-Meru, and that at the foot of this mountain are the heavens of twenty-one other gods.'—(*View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos,* vol. i. p. 13.) So Wilford, in a Treatise on the mountain Caucasus, in the *Asiatic Researches,* vol. vi. p. 488, says, 'The Hindoos regard the mountain Meru as the dwelling-place of the gods. In the Puranas it is said, that upon the mountain Meru there is eternal day, for a space of fourteen degrees around the mountain Su-Meru, and consequently eternal night for the same space on the opposite side; so the Hindoos are constrained to admit that Su-Meru is directly upon the top of the shadow of the earth, and that from the earth to that peak there is a vast cone-formed hill, dense as other earthly bodies, but invisible, impalpable, and impassable by mortals. On the side of this hill are various abodes, which, the higher one ascends, become the more beautiful, and which are made the dwellings of the blessed, according to the degrees of their desert. God and the most exalted of the divine beings have their abodes on the *sides* of the north, and on the top of this mountain.' According to the Zendavesta, the Al Bordsch is the oldest and the highest of the mountains; upon that is the throne of Ormuzd, and the assemblage of the heavenly spirits (*Feruer;* see Rosenmüller, *Alterthumskunde,* vol. i. pp. 154-157). Thus in Babylon, some of the mountains north in Armenia may have been supposed to be the peculiar dwelling-place of the gods. Such a mountain would *appear* to be under the north pole, and the constellations would seem to revolve around it. It is not improbable that the Aurora Borealis, playing often as it does in the north with peculiar magnificence, might have contributed to the belief that this was the peculiar abode of the gods. Unable to account—as indeed all moderns are—for these peculiar and magnificent lights in the north, it accorded with the poetic and mythological fancy of the ancients to suppose that they were designed to play around, and to adorn the habitation of the gods. This disposition to make the mountains of the north the seat of the gods, may have arisen also in part from the fact that the country on the north of Babylon was a volcanic region, and that the light emitted from volcanoes was an appropriate manifestation of the glory of superior invisible beings. 'On the borders of the Caspian [Sea], in the country around the Bakir, there is a tract called The Field of Fire, which continually emits inflammable gas, while springs of naphtha and petroleum occur in the same vicinity, as also mud volcanoes. In the chain of Elburs, to the south of this sea, is a lofty mountain, which, according to Morier, sometimes emits smoke, and at the base of which there are several craters where sulphur and saltpetre are procured in sufficient abundance to be used in commerce.'—(Lyell's *Geology,* vol. i. p. 297.) We find some traces of these ideas in the Scriptures. The *north* is often mentioned as the seat of the whirlwind, the storm, and especially as the residence of the cherubim. Thus in Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim, the whole magnificent scene is represented as coming from the *north*—as if the appropriate abode of the cherubim:

'I looked, and lo! a whirlwind *from the north*
Came sweeping onward, a vast cloud that rolled
In volumes, charged with gleaming fire, along,
And cast its splendours all around.
Now from within shone forth, what seemed the glow
Of gold and silver molten in the flame,
And in the midst thereof the form expressed,
As of a fourfold living thing—a shape
That yet contained the semblance of a man.'
Ezek. i. 4, 5, trans. in Marsh's *Herder.*

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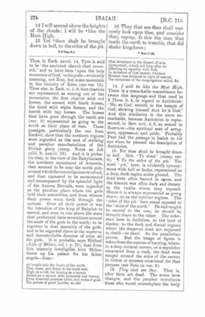

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be[a] like the Most High.

15 Yet[b] thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

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;

[a] 2 Thes.2.4. [b] Mat.11.23.

Thus, in Ezek. xxviii. 14, Tyre is said to be 'the anointed cherub that covereth,' and to have been 'upon the holy mountain of God,' or *the gods*—evidently meaning, not Zion, but some mountain in the vicinity of Eden (see ver. 13). Thus also, in Zech. vi. 1–8, four chariots are represented as coming out of the mountains, the first chariot with red horses, the second with black horses, the third with white horses, and the fourth with bay horses. The horses that have gone through the earth are (ver. 8) represented as going to the *north* as their place of rest. These passages, particularly the one from Ezekiel, show that the northern regions were regarded as the seat of striking and peculiar manifestations of the Divine glory (comp. Notes on Job xxiii. 9; xxxvii. 22). And it is probable that, in the view of the Babylonians, the northern mountains of Armenia, that seemed to be near the north pole, around which the constellations revolved, and that appeared to be surmounted and encompassed by the splendid light of the Aurora Borealis, were regarded as the peculiar place where the gods held their assemblies, and from whence their power went forth through the nations. Over all their power it was the intention of the king of Babylon to ascend, and even to rise above the stars that performed their revolutions around the seats of the gods in the north; to be *supreme* in that assembly of the gods, and to be regarded there as the supreme and incontrollable director of even all the gods. It is probable, says Mitford (*Life of Milton,* vol. i. p. 73), that from this scarcely intelligible hint Milton threw up his palace for his fallen angels—thus:

At length into the limits of the north
They came, and Satan to his royal seat,
High on a hill, far blazing as a mount
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers,
From diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of gold.
The palace of great Lucifer, so call
That structure in the dialect of men
Interpreted; which not long after he
Affecting an equality with God,
In imitation of that mount, whereon
Messiah was declared in sight of heaven,
The mountain of the congregation called, &c.

14. *I will be like the Most High.* There is a remarkable resemblance between this language and that used in 2 Thess. ii. 4, in regard to Antichrist: 'He, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' And this similarity is the more remarkable, because Antichrist is represented, in Rev. xvii. 4, 5, as seated in BABYLON—the spiritual seat of arrogance, oppression, and pride. Probably Paul had the passage in Isaiah in his eye when he penned the description of Antichrist.

15. *Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell.* Heb. 'To sheol' (comp. ver. 9). ¶ *To the sides of the pit.* The word 'pit,' here, is evidently synonymous with *hell* or *hades,* represented as a deep, dark region under ground. The dead were often buried in caves, and the descent was often dark and dreary, to the vaults where they reposed. Hence it is always represented as *going down;* or, as the *inferior* regions. The 'sides of the pit' here stand opposed to the 'sides of the north.' He had sought to *ascend* to the one; he should be *brought down* to the other. The reference here is, doubtless, to the land of shades; to the dark and dismal regions where the departed dead are supposed to dwell—to *sheol.* So the parallelism proves. But the image or figure is taken from the custom of burying, where, in a deep natural cavern, or a sepulchre excavated from a rock, the dead were ranged around the *sides* of the cavern in niches or recesses excavated for that purpose (see Note on ver. 9).

16. *They that see thee.* That is, after thou art dead. The scene here changes, and the prophet introduces those who would contemplate the body

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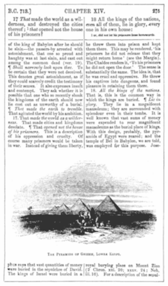

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIV. 275

17 *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; [1] *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?

18 All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, *every* one in his own house:

[1] or, did not let his prisoners loose homewards.

of the king of Babylon after he should be slain—the passers-by arrested with astonishment, that one so proud and haughty was at last slain, and cast out among the common dead (ver. 19). ¶ *Shall narrowly look upon thee.* To be certain that they were not deceived. This denotes great astonishment, as if they could scarcely credit the testimony of their senses. It also expresses insult and contempt. They ask whether it is possible that one who so recently shook the kingdoms of the earth should now lie cast out as unworthy of a burial. ¶ *That made the earth to tremble.* That agitated the world by his ambition.

17. That *made the world as a wilderness.* That made cities and kingdoms desolate. ¶ That *opened not the house of his prisoners.* This is a description of his oppression and cruelty. Of course many prisoners would be taken in war. Instead of giving them liberty, he threw them into prison and kept them there. This may be rendered, 'his prisoners he did not release that they might return home' (see the Margin). The Chaldee renders it, 'To his prisoners he did not open the door.' The sense is substantially the same. The idea is, that he was cruel and oppressive. He threw his captives into dungeons, and found pleasure in retaining them there.

18. *All the kings of the nations.* That is, this is the common way in which the kings are buried. ¶ *Lie in glory.* They lie in a magnificent mausoleum; they are surrounded with splendour even in their tombs. It is well known that vast sums of money were expended to rear magnificent mausoleums as the burial place of kings. With this design, probably, the pyramids of Egypt were reared; and the temple of Bel in Babylon, we are told, was employed for this purpose. Josephus says that vast quantities of money were buried in the sepulchre of David. The kings of Israel were buried in a royal burying place on Mount Zion (2 Chron. xxi. 20; xxxv. 24; Neh. iii. 16). For a description of the sepul-

The Pyramids of Ghizeh, Lower Egypt.

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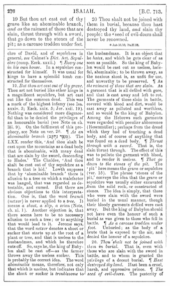

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19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: the [a] seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned.

[a] Job 18.16; Ps.37.28.

chre of David, and of sepulchres in general, *see* Calmet's *Dict.* Art. *Sepulchre* (comp. Ezek. xxxii.) ¶ *Every one in his own house.* In a sepulchre constructed for himself. It was usual for kings to have a splendid tomb constructed for themselves.

19. *But thou art cast out of thy grave.* Thou art not buried like other kings in a magnificent sepulchre, but art cast out like the common dead. This was a mark of the highest infamy (see Isa. xxxiv. 3; Ezek. xxix. 5; Jer. xxii. 19). Nothing was considered more disgraceful than to be denied the privileges of an honourable burial (see Note on ch. liii. 9). On the fulfilment of this prophecy, see Note on ver. 20. ¶ *As an abominable branch* (נֵצֶר נִתְעָב). The LXX. render this, 'And thou shalt be cast upon the mountains as a dead body that is abominable, with many dead that are slain by the sword, descending to Hades.' The Chaldee, 'And thou shalt be cast out of thy sepulchre as a branch that is hid.' Lowth supposes that by 'abominable branch' there is allusion to a tree on which a malefactor was hanged, that was regarded as detestable, and cursed. But there are obvious objections to this interpretation. One is, that the word *branch* (*netzer*) is never applied to a *tree.* It means *a shoot, a slip, a scion* (Note, ch. xi. 1). Another objection is, that there seems here to be no necessary allusion to such a tree; or to anything that would lead to it. Jerome says, that the word *netzer* denotes a shoot or sucker that starts up at the root of a plant or tree, and that is useless to the husbandman, and which he therefore cuts off. So, says he, the king of Babylon shall be cast off—as the farmer throws away the useless sucker. This is probably the correct idea. The word *abominable* means, therefore, not only that which is *useless,* but indicates that the shoot or sucker is *troublesome* to the husbandman. It is an object that he *hates,* and which he gets clear of as soon as possible. So the king of Babylon would be cast out as useless, hateful, abominable; to be thrown away, as the noxious shoot is, as unfit for use, and unworthy to be preserved. ¶ As *the raiment of those that are slain.* As a garment that is all defiled with gore, and that is cast away and left to rot. The garments of those slain in battle, covered with blood and dirt, would be cast away as polluted and worthless, and so would be the king of Babylon. Among the Hebrews such garments were regarded with peculiar abhorrence (Rosenmüller); perhaps from the dread which they had of touching a dead body, and of course of anything that was found on a dead body. ¶ *Thrust through with a sword.* That is, the slain thrust through. The effect of this was to pollute the garment with blood, and to render it useless. ¶ *That go down to the stones of the pit.* The 'pit' here means the grave or sepulchre (ver. 15). The phrase 'stones of the pit,' conveys the idea that the grave or sepulchre was usually either excavated from the solid rock, or constructed of stones. The idea is simply, that those who were slain with the sword were buried in the usual manner, though their bloody garments defiled were cast away. But the king of Babylon should not have even the honour of such a burial as was given to those who fell in battle. ¶ *As a carcase trodden under foot.* Unburied; as the body of a brute that is exposed to the air, and denied the honour of a sepulchre.

20. *Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial.* That is, even with those who are slain with the sword in battle, and to whom is granted the privilege of a decent burial. ¶ *Hast destroyed thy land.* Hast been a cruel, harsh, and oppressive prince. ¶ *The seed of evil-doers.* The posterity of

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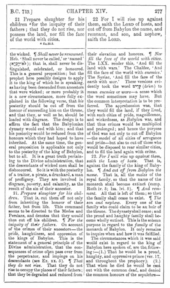

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIV. 277

21 Prepare slaughter for his children [a] for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

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.

[a] Ex.20.5.

the wicked. ¶ *Shall never be renowned.* Heb. 'Shall never be called,' or 'named' (לֹא־יִקָּרֵא); that is, shall never be distinguished, *celebrated,* or honoured. This is a general proposition; but the prophet here possibly designs to apply it to the king of which he is speaking, as having been descended from ancestors that were wicked; or more probably it is a *new* circumstance, more fully explained in the following verse, that *his* posterity should be cut off from the honour of succeeding him on the throne, and that they, *as* well as he, should be loaded with disgrace. The design is to affirm the fact that the Babylonian dynasty would end with him; and that his posterity would be reduced from the honours which they had hoped to have inherited. At the same time, the general proposition is applicable not only to the posterity of the king of Babylon, but to all. It is a great truth pertaining to the Divine administration, that the descendants of wicked men shall be dishonoured. So it is with the posterity of a traitor, a pirate, a drunkard, a man of profligacy. They are involved in disgrace, poverty, and calamity, as the result of the sin of their ancestor.

21. *Prepare slaughter for his children.* That is, cut them off not only from inheriting the honour of their father, but from life. This command seems to be directed to the Medes and Persians, and denotes that they would thus cut off his children. ¶ *For the iniquity of their fathers.* On account of the crimes of their ancestors—the pride, haughtiness, and oppression of the kings of Babylon. This is the statement of a general principle of the Divine administration, that the consequences of crime often pass over from the perpetrator, and impinge on his descendants (see Ex. xx. 5). ¶ *That they do not rise.* That they do not rise to occupy the places of their fathers; that they be degraded and reduced from their elevation and honours. ¶ *Nor fill the face of the world with cities.* The LXX. render this, 'And fill the land with wars.' The Chaldee, 'And fill the face of the world with *enemies.*' The Syriac, 'And fill the face of the earth with *war.*' These versions evidently took the word עָרִים (*ârim*) to mean *enemies* or *wars*—a sense which the word sometimes may have. But the common interpretation is to be preferred. The apprehension was, that they would fill the land, if they lived, with such cities of pride, magnificence, and wickedness, as *Babylon* was, and that thus crimes would be multiplied and prolonged; and hence the purpose of God was not only to cut off Babylon—the *model* of all cities of arrogance and pride—but also to cut off those who would be disposed to rear similar cities, and to fill the land again with crime.

22. *For I will rise up against them, saith the* Lord *of hosts.* That is, against the family of the king of Babylon. ¶ *And cut off from Babylon the name.* That is, all the *males* of the royal family, so that the name of the monarch shall become extinct (comp. Ruth iv. 5; Isa. lvi. 5). ¶ *And remnant.* All that is left of them; so that the family shall cease to exist. ¶ *The son and nephew.* Every one of the family who could claim to be an heir of the throne. The dynasty shall cease; and the proud and haughty family shall become wholly extinct. This is the solemn purpose in regard to the *family* of the monarch of Babylon. It only remains to inquire when and how it was fulfilled.

The circumstances which it was said would exist in regard to the king of Babylon here spoken of, are the following:—(1.) That he would be a proud, haughty, and oppressive prince (ver. 17, and throughout the prophecy). (2.) That when he died he would be cast out with the common dead, and denied the common honours of the sepulchre—

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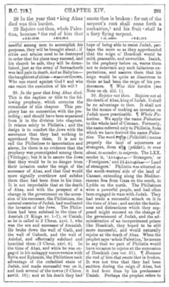

28 In the year that [a] king Ahaz died was this burden.

29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because [b] the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice,[1] and his fruit [c] *shall be* a fiery flying serpent.

a 2 Ki.16.20. b 2 Ch.26.6. 1 or, adder. c 2 Ki.18.8.

needful among men to accomplish *his* purposes, they will be brought about; if cities and armies need to be destroyed in order that *his* plans may succeed, and his church be safe, they will be demolished, just as the army of Sennacherib was laid pale in death, and as Babylon—the haughtiest of cities—was overthrown. Who can stand against God? and who can resist the execution of his will?

28. *In the year that king Ahaz died.* This is the caption or title to the following prophecy, which occupies the remainder of this chapter. This prophecy has no connection with the preceding; and should have been separated from it in the division into chapters. It relates solely to Philistia; and the design is to comfort the Jews with the assurance that they had nothing to apprehend from them. It is not to call the Philistines to lamentation and alarm, for there is no evidence that the prophecy was promulgated among them (Vitringa); but it is to assure the Jews that they would be in no danger from their invasion under the reign of the successor of Ahaz, and that God would more signally overthrow and subdue them than had been done in his time. It is not improbable that at the death of Ahaz, and with the prospect of a change in the government on the accession of his successor, the Philistines, the natural enemies of Judah, had meditated the invasion of the Jews. The Philistines had been subdued in the time of Azariah (2 Kings xv. 1–7), or Uzziah, as he is called in 2 Chron. xxvi. 1, who was the son and successor of Amaziah. He broke down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Gabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and effectually subdued and humbled them (2 Chron. xxvi. 6). In the time of Ahaz, and while he was engaged in his unhappy controversies with Syria and Ephraim, the Philistines took advantage of the enfeebled state of Judah, and made successful war on it, and took several of the towns (2 Chron. xxviii. 18); and at his death they had hope of being able to resist Judah, perhaps the more so as they apprehended that the reign of Hezekiah would be mild, peaceable, and unwarlike. Isaiah, in the prophecy before us, warns them not to entertain any such fallacious expectations, and assures them that his reign would be quite as disastrous to them as had been the reign of his predecessors. ¶ *Was this burden* (see Note on ch. xiii. 1).

29. *Rejoice not thou.* Rejoice not at the death of Ahaz, king of Judah. It shall be no advantage to thee. It shall not be the means of making an invasion on Judah more practicable. ¶ *Whole Palestina.* We apply the name *Palestine* to the whole land of Canaan. Formerly, the name referred only to Philistia, from which we have derived the name *Palestine*. The word פְּלֶשֶׁת (*Pelesheth*) means properly the land of sojourners or strangers, from פָּלַשׁ (*palash*), *to rove about, to wander, to migrate*. The LXX. render it, 'Ἀλλόφυλοι—'Strangers,' or 'Foreigners,' and Γῆ ἀλλοφύλων—'Land of strangers.' Philistia was situated on the south-western side of the land of Canaan, extending along the Mediterranean Sea from Gaza on the south, to Lydda on the north. The Philistines were a powerful people, and had often been engaged in wars with Judah. They had made a successful attack on it in the time of Ahaz; and amidst the feebleness and distractions which they supposed might succeed on the change of the government of Judah, and the administration of an inexperienced prince like Hezekiah, they hoped to be still more successful, and would naturally rejoice at the death of Ahaz. When the prophet says '*whole* Palestina,' he means to say that no part of Philistia would have occasion to rejoice at the succession of Hezekiah (see ver. 31). ¶ *Because the rod of him that smote thee is broken.* It was not true that they had been smitten during the reign of Ahaz, but it had been done by his predecessor Uzziah. Perhaps the prophet refers to

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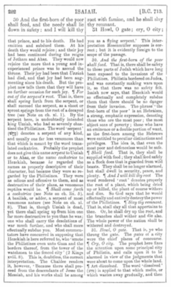

30 And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city;

that prince, and to his death. He had smitten and subdued them. At his death they would rejoice; and their joy had been continued during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz. They would now rejoice the more that a young and inexperienced prince was to ascend the throne. Their joy had been that *Uzziah* had died, and that joy had been augmenting since his death. But the prophet now tells them that they will have no further occasion for such joy. ¶ *For out of the serpent's root.* That is, there shall spring forth from the serpent, or shall succeed the serpent, as a shoot or sprout springs from the root of a decayed tree (see Note on ch. xi. 1). By the serpent here, is undoubtedly intended king Uzziah, who had so severely chastised the Philistines. The word 'serpent' (נָחָשׁ) denotes a serpent of any kind, and usually one far less venomous than that which is meant by the word translated cockatrice. Probably the prophet does not give this name *serpent* to Uzziah or to Ahaz, or the name *cockatrice* to Hezekiah, because *he* regarded the names as properly descriptive of their character, but because they were so regarded by the Philistines. They were as odious and offensive to them, and as destructive of their plans, as venomous reptiles would be. ¶ *Shall come forth a cockatrice* (see Note on ch. lix. 5). A basilisk, or adder, a serpent of most venomous nature (see Note on ch. xi. 8). That is, though Uzziah is dead, yet there shall spring up from him one far more destructive to you than he was; one who shall carry the desolations of war much further, and who shall more effectually subdue you. Most commentators have concurred in supposing that Hezekiah is here referred to, who 'smote the Philistines even unto Gaza and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city' (2 Kings xviii. 8). This is, doubtless, the correct interpretation. The Chaldee renders it, however, 'Because there shall proceed from the descendants of Jesse the Messiah, and his works shall be among you as a flying serpent.' This interpretation Rosenmüller supposes is correct; but it is evidently foreign to the scope of the passage.

30. *And the first-born of the poor shall feed.* That is, there shall be safety to those parts of Judah which have long been exposed to the invasions of the Philistines. Philistia bordered on Judea, and was constantly making wars upon it, so that there was no safety felt. Isaiah now says, that Hezekiah would so effectually and completely subdue them that there should be no danger from their invasion. The phrase 'the first-born of the poor' is an Hebraism, a strong, emphatic expression, denoting those who are the most poor; the most abject sons of poverty; those who have an eminence or a double portion of want, as the first-born among the Hebrews were entitled to peculiar distinctions and privileges. The idea is, that even the most poor and defenceless would be safe. ¶ *Shall feed.* That is, they shall be supplied with food; they shall feed safely as a flock does that is guarded from wild beasts. They shall be no longer alarmed, but shall dwell in security, peace, and plenty. ¶ *And I will kill thy root.* The word rendered 'root' denotes properly the root of a plant, which being dried up or killed, the plant of course withers and dies. So God says that he would effectually and entirely destroy the power of the Philistines. ¶ *Slay thy remnant.* That is, shall slay all that appertains to thee. Or, he shall dry up the root, and the branches shall wither and die also. The whole power of the nation shall be withered and destroyed.

31. *Howl, O gate.* That is, ye who throng the gate. The *gates* of a city were the chief places of concourse. ¶ *Cry, O city.* The prophet here fixes the attention upon some principal city of Philistia, and calls upon it to be alarmed in view of the judgments that were about to come upon the whole land. ¶ Art *dissolved.* The word 'dissolved' (מוּג) is applied to that which melts, or which wastes away gradually, and then

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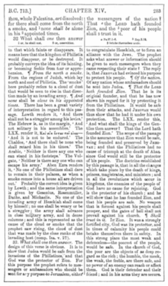

thou, whole Palestina, *art* dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and [1] none *shall be* alone in his [2] appointed times.

32 What shall *one* then answer the messengers of the nation? That [a] the LORD hath founded Zion, and the [b] poor of his people shall [3] trust in it.

1 or, he shall not. 2 or, assemblies. a Ps.87.1-5. b Zep.3.12. 3 betake themselves unto.

to that which faints or disappears. It means here that the kingdom of Philistia would disappear, or be destroyed. It probably conveys the idea of its fainting, or becoming feeble from fear or apprehension. ¶ *From the north a smoke.* From the regions of Judah, which lay north and east of Philistia. The 'smoke' here probably refers to a cloud of dust that would be seen to rise in that direction made by an invading army. ¶ *And none shall be alone in his appointed times.* There has been a great variety of interpretation in regard to this passage. Lowth renders it, 'And there shall not be a straggler among his levies.' The Hebrew is, as in the margin, 'And not solitary in his assemblies.' The LXX. render it, Καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τοῦ εἶναι—'And it is not to be endured.' The Chaldee, 'And there shall be none who shall retard him in his times.' The Arabic, 'Neither is there any one who can stand in his footsteps.' The Vulgate, 'Neither is there any one who can escape his army.' Aben Ezra renders it, 'No one of the Philistines shall dare to remain in their palaces, as when a smoke comes into a house all are driven out.' Probably the correct idea is given by Lowth; and the same interpretation is given by Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Dathe, and Michaelis. No one of the invading army of Hezekiah shall come by himself; no one shall be weary or be a straggler; the army shall advance in close military array, and in dense columns; and this is represented as the cause of the cloud or smoke that the prophet saw rising, the cloud of dust that was made by the close ranks of the invading host (comp. Isa. v. 27).

32. *What shall one then answer.* The design of this verse is obvious. It is to show that Judea would be safe from the invasions of the Philistines, and that God was the protector of Zion. For this purpose the prophet refers to messengers or ambassadors who should be sent for any purpose to Jerusalem, either to congratulate Hezekiah, or to form an alliance with the Jews. The prophet asks what answer or information should be given to such messengers when they came respecting their state? The reply is, that JEHOVAH had evinced his purpose to protect his people. ¶ *Of the nation.* Of any nation whose ambassadors should be sent into Judea. ¶ *That the LORD hath founded Zion.* That he is its original founder, and that he has now shown his regard for it by protecting it from the Philistines. It would be safe from their attacks, and JEHOVAH would thus show that he had it under his own protection. The LXX. render this, 'And what shall the kings of the Gentiles then answer? That the Lord hath founded Zion.' The scope of the passage is the assurance that Zion would be safe, being founded and preserved by JEHOVAH; and that the Philistines had no cause of triumph at the death of Ahaz, since God would still be the protector of his people. The doctrine established by this passage is, that in all the changes which take place by the death of kings, princes, magistrates, and ministers; and in all the revolutions which occur in kingdoms, the enemies of the people of God have no cause for rejoicing. God is the protector of his church; and he will show that he has founded Zion, and that his people are safe. No weapon that is formed against his people shall prosper, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church. ¶ *Shall trust in it.* In Zion. It was a strongly fortified city. God was its protector, and in times of calamity his people could betake themselves there in safety. In this strong place the most weak and defenceless—the poorest of the people, would be safe. In the church of God, the poor are the objects of as deep regard as the rich; the humble, the meek, the weak, the feeble, are there safe, and no power of an enemy can reach or affect them. God is their defender and their friend; and in his arms they are secure.

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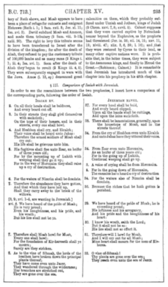

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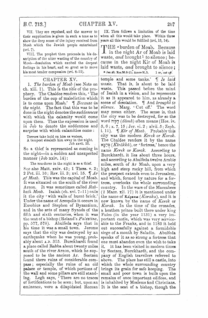

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VII. They are repulsed, and the answer to their supplication is given in such a tone as to show the deep sense of the injury received from Moab which the Jewish people entertained (xvi. 7).

VIII. The prophet then proceeds in his description of the utter wasting of the country of Moab—desolation which excited the deepest feelings in his heart, and so great as to move his most tender compassion (xvi. 8-12).

IX. Then follows a limitation of the time when all this would take place. Within three years all this would be fulfilled (xvi. 13, 14).

THE ᵃburden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought [1] to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, *and* brought to silence;

a Jer. 48. Eze. 25. 8-11; Amos 2. 1. 1 or, *cut off.*

CHAPTER XV.

1. *The burden of Moab* (see Note on ch. xiii. 1). This is the *title* of the prophecy. The Chaldee renders this, 'The burden of the cup of malediction which is to come upon Moab.' ¶ *Because in the night.* The fact that this was to be done in the night denotes the *suddenness* with which the calamity would come upon them. Thus the expression is used in Job to denote the suddenness and surprise with which calamities come:

Terrors take hold on him as waters,
A tempest stealeth him away in the night.
Job xxvii. 20.

So a thief is represented as coming in the night—in a sudden and unexpected manner (Job xxiv. 14):

The murderer in the night is as a thief.

See also Matt. xxiv. 43; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15. ¶ *Ar of Moab.* This was the capital of Moab. It was situated on the south of the river Arnon. It was sometimes called *Rabbath Moab.* Isaiah (ch. xvi. 7-11) calls it the city 'with walls of burnt brick.' Under the name of Areopolis it occurs in Eusebius and Stephen of Byzantium, and in the acts of many Synods of the fifth and sixth centuries, when it was the seat of a bishop (Reland's *Palestine*, pp. 577, 578). Abulfeda says that in his time it was a small town. Jerome says that the city was destroyed by an earthquake when he was young, probably about A.D. 315. Burckhardt found a place called Rabba about twenty miles south of the river Arnon, which he supposed to be the ancient Ar. Seetzen found there ruins of considerable compass; especially the ruins of an old palace or temple, of which portions of the wall and some pillars are still standing. Legh says, 'There are no traces of fortifications to be seen; but, upon an eminence, were a dilapidated Roman temple and some tanks.' ¶ *Is laid waste.* That is, is about to be laid waste. This passed before the mind of Isaiah in a vision, and he represents it as it appeared to him, as already a scene of desolation. ¶ And *brought to silence.* Marg. 'Cut off.' The word may mean either. The sense is, that the city was to be destroyed, for so the word דָּמָה (*dâmâ*) often means (Hos. iv. 5, 6; x. 7, 15; Jer. vi. 2; xlvii. 5; Zeph. i. 11). ¶ *Kir of Moab.* Probably this city was the modern *Kerek* or *Karak.* The Chaldee renders it by the name כְּרַכָּא (*Kĕrâkkâ*), or 'fortress,' hence the name *Kerek* or *Karak.* According to Burckhardt, it lies about three hours, and according to Abulfeda twelve Arabic miles, south of Ar Moab, upon a very high and steep rocky hill, from which the prospect extends even to Jerusalem, and which, formed by nature for a fortress, overlooks the whole surrounding country. In the wars of the Maccabees (2 Macc. xii. 17) it is mentioned under the name of Κάρακα (*Karaka*), and it is now known by the name of *Kerek* or *Karak.* In the time of the crusades, a heathen prince built there under king Fulco (in the year 1131) a very important castle, which was very serviceable to the Franks, and in 1183 it held out successfully against a formidable siege of a month by Saladin. Abulfeda speaks of it as so strong a fortress that one must abandon even the wish to take it. It has been visited in modern times by Seetzen, Burckhardt, and the company of English travellers referred to above. The place has still a castle, into which the whole surrounding country brings its grain for safe keeping. The small and poor town is built upon the remains of once important edifices, and is inhabited by Moslems and Christians. It is the seat of a bishop, though the

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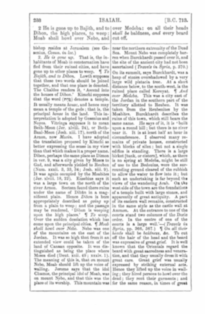

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2 He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads *shall be* baldness, *and* every beard cut off.

bishop resides at Jerusalem (see Gesenius, *Comm. in loc.*)

2. *He is gone up.* That is, the inhabitants of Moab in consternation have fled from their ruined cities, and have gone up to other places to weep. ¶ *To Bajith, and to Dibon.* Lowth supposes that these two words should be joined together, and that one place is denoted. The Chaldee renders it, 'Ascend into the houses of Dibon.' Kimchi supposes that the word (בַּיִת) denotes a temple. It usually means *house*, and hence may mean a temple of the gods; that is, the principal *house* in the land. This interpretation is adopted by Gesenius and Noyes. Vitringa supposes it to mean Beth-Meon (Jer. xlviii. 24), or Beth-Baal-Meon (Josh. xiii. 17), north of the Arnon, now *Macin.* I have adopted the translation proposed by Kimchi as better expressing the sense in my view than that which makes it a proper name. Dibon, perhaps the same place as Dimon in ver. 9, was a city given by Moses to Gad, and afterwards yielded to Reuben (Num. xxxii. 3, 33, 34; Josh. xiii. 9). It was again occupied by the Moabites (Jer. xlviii. 18, 22). Eusebius says it was a large town on the north of the river Arnon. Seetzen found there ruins under the name of Dibân in a magnificent plain. Hence *Dibon* is here appropriately described as *going up* from a plain to weep; and the passage may be rendered, 'Dibon is weeping upon the high places.' ¶ *To weep.* Over the sudden desolation which has come upon the principal cities. ¶ *Moab shall howl over Nebo.* Nebo was one of the mountains on the east of the Jordan. It was so high that from it an extended view could be taken of the land of Canaan opposite. It was distinguished as being the place where Moses died (Deut. xxxii. 49; xxxiv. 1). The meaning of this is, that on mount Nebo, Moab should lift up the voice of wailing. Jerome says that the idol Chamos, the principal idol of Moab, was on mount Nebo, and that this was the place of its worship. This mountain was near the northern extremity of the Dead Sea. Mount Nebo was completely barren when Burckhardt passed over it, and the site of the ancient city had not been ascertained (*Travels in Syria*, p. 370.) On its summit, says Burckhardt, was a heap of stones overshadowed by a very large wild pistacia tree. At a short distance below, to the south-west, is the ruined place called Kereyat. ¶ *And over Medeba.* This was a city east of the Jordan in the southern part of the territory allotted to Reuben. It was taken from the Reubenites by the Moabites. Burckhardt describes the ruins of this town, which still bears the same name. He says of it, it is 'built upon a round hill; but there is no river near it. It is at least half an hour in circumference. I observed many remains of private houses, constructed with blocks of silex; but not a single edifice is standing. There is a large birket [tank, or cistern], which, as there is no spring at Medeba, might be still of use to the Bedouins, were the surrounding ground cleared of the rubbish to allow the water to flow into it; but such an undertaking is far beyond the views of the wandering Arab. On the west side of the town are the foundations of a temple built with large stones, and apparently of great antiquity. A part of its eastern wall remains, constructed in the same style as the castle wall at Ammon. At the entrance to one of the courts stand two columns of the Doric order. In the centre of one of the courts is a large well.'—(*Travels in Syria*, pp. 366, 367.) ¶ *On all their heads shall be baldness, &c.* To cut off the hair of the head and the beard was expressive of great grief. It is well known that the Orientals regard the beard with great sacredness and veneration, and that they usually dress it with great care. Great grief was usually expressed by striking external acts. Hence they lifted up the voice in wailing; they hired persons to howl over the dead; they rent their garments; and for the same reason, in times of great

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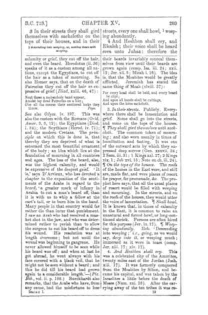

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3 In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, [1] weeping abundantly.

4 And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh; their voice shall be heard *even* unto Jahaz: therefore the

1 *descending into weeping, or, coming down with weeping.*

calamity or grief, they cut off the hair, and even the beard. Herodotus (ii. 36) speaks of it as a custom among all nations, except the Egyptians, to cut off the hair as a token of mourning. So also Homer says, that on the death of Patroclus they cut off the hair as expressive of grief (*Iliad*, xxiii. 46, 47):

Next these a melancholy band appear,
Amidst lay dead Patroclus on a bier;
O'er all the course their scattered locks they threw.
Pope.

See also *Odyss.* iv. 197. This was also the custom with the Romans (Ovid. *Amor.* 3, 5, 12); the Egyptians (Diod. i. 84); the Scythians (Herod. iv. 71); and the modern Cretans. The *principle* on which this is done is, that thereby they are deprived of what is esteemed the most beautiful ornament of the body; an idea which lies at the foundation of mourning in all countries and ages. The loss of the beard, also, was the highest calamity, and would be expressive of the deepest grief. 'It is,' says D'Arvieux, who has devoted a chapter to the exposition of the sentiments of the Arabs in regard to the *beard*, 'a greater mark of infamy in Arabia to cut a man's beard off, than it is with us to whip a fellow at the cart's tail, or to burn him in the hand. Many people in that country would far rather die than incur that punishment. I saw an Arab who had received a musket shot in the jaw, and who was determined rather to perish than to allow the surgeon to cut his beard off to dress his wound. His resolution was at length overcome; but not until the wound was beginning to gangrene. He never allowed himself to be seen while his beard was off; and when at last he got abroad, he went always with his face covered with a black veil, that he might not be seen without a beard; and this he did till his beard had grown again to a considerable length.'—(*Pic. Bib.*, vol. ii. p. 109.) Burckhardt also remarks, that the Arabs who have, from any cause, had the misfortune to lose their beards invariably conceal themselves from view until their beards are grown again (comp. Isa. iii. 24; xxii. 12; Jer. xli. 5; Micah i. 16). The idea is, that the Moabites would be greatly afflicted. Jeremiah has stated the same thing of Moab (xlviii. 37):

For every head shall be bald, and every beard be clipt;
And upon all hands shall be cuttings,
And upon the loins sackcloth.

3. *In their streets.* Publicly. Everywhere there shall be lamentation and grief. Some shall go into the streets, and some on the tops of the houses. ¶ *They shall gird themselves with sackcloth.* The common token of mourning; and also worn usually in times of humiliation and fasting. It was one of the outward acts by which they expressed deep sorrow (Gen. xxxvii. 34; 2 Sam. iii. 31; 1 Kings xxi. 27; 2 Kings xix. 1; Job xvi. 15; Note on ch. iii. 24). ¶ *On the tops of the houses.* The roofs of the houses in the East were, and still are, made flat, and were places of resort for prayer, for promenade, &c. The prophet here says, that all the usual places of resort would be filled with weeping and mourning. In the streets, and on the roofs of the houses, they would utter the voice of lamentation. ¶ *Shall howl.* It is known that, in times of calamity in the East, it is common to raise an unnatural and forced howl, or long-continued shriek. Persons are often hired for this purpose (Jer. ix. 17). ¶ *Weeping abundantly.* Heb. 'Descending into weeping;' *i.e.*, going, as we would say, *deep into it*, or weeping much; immersed as it were in tears (comp. Jer. xiii. 17; xiv. 17).

4. *And Heshbon shall cry.* This was a celebrated city of the Amorites, twenty miles east of the Jordan (Josh. xiii. 17). It was formerly conquered from the Moabites by Sihon, and became his capital, and was taken by the Israelites a little before the death of Moses (Num. xxi. 25). After the carrying away of the ten tribes it was re-

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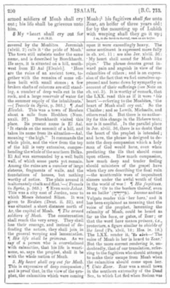

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armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

5 My [a] heart shall cry out for Moab;[1] 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;

a ch.16.11. 1 or, to the borders thereof, even as an heifer.

covered by the Moabites. Jeremiah (xlviii. 2) calls it 'the pride of Moab.' The town still subsists under the same name, and is described by Burckhardt. He says, it is situated on a hill, south-west from El Aal [Elealeh]. 'Here are the ruins of an ancient town, together with the remains of some edifices built with small stones; a few broken shafts of columns are still standing, a number of deep wells cut in the rock, and a large reservoir of water for the summer supply of the inhabitants.'—(*Travels in Syria*, p. 365.) ¶ *And Elealeh.* This was a town of Reuben about a mile from Heshbon (Num. xxxii. 37). Burckhardt visited this place. Its present name is El Aal. 'It stands on the summit of a hill, and takes its name from its situation—Aal, meaning "the high." It commands the whole plain, and the view from the top of the hill is very extensive, comprehending the whole of the southern Belka. El Aal was surrounded by a well built wall, of which some parts yet remain. Among the ruins are a number of large cisterns, fragments of walls, and the foundations of houses, but nothing worthy of notice. The plain around it is alternately chalk and flint.'—(*Travels in Syria*, p. 365.) ¶ Even *unto Jahaz.* This was a city east of Jordan, near to which Moses defeated Sihon. It was given to Reuben (Deut. ii. 32), and was situated a short distance north of Ar, the capital of Moab. ¶ *The armed soldiers of Moab.* The consternation shall reach the very army. They shall lose their courage, and instead of defending the nation, they shall join in the general weeping and lamentation. ¶ *His life shall be grievous.* As we say of a person who is overwhelmed with calamities, that his life is wearisome, so, says the prophet, shall it be with the whole nation of Moab.

5. *My heart shall cry out for Moab.* This is expressive of deep compassion; and is proof that, in the view of the prophet, the calamities which were coming upon it were exceedingly heavy. The same sentiment is expressed more fully in ch. xvi. 11; see also Jer. xlviii. 36: 'My heart shall sound for Moab like pipes.' The phrase denotes great inward pain and anguish in view of the calamities of others; and is an expression of the fact that we feel ourselves oppressed and borne down by sympathy on account of their sufferings (see Note on ch. xxi. 3). It is worthy of remark, that the LXX. read this as if it were '*his* heart'—referring to the Moabites, 'the heart of Moab shall cry out.' So the Chaldee; and so Lowth, Michaelis, and others read it. But there is no authority for this change in the Hebrew text; nor is it needful. In the parallel place in Jer. xlviii. 36, there is no doubt that the heart of the prophet is intended; and here, the phrase is designed to denote the deep compassion which a holy man of God would have, even when predicting the ills that should come upon others. How much compassion, how much deep and tender feeling should ministers of the gospel have when they are describing the final ruin—the unutterable woes of impenitent sinners under the awful wrath of God in the world of woe! ¶ *His fugitives.* Marg. 'Or to the borders thereof, even as an heifer' ([illegible]). Jerome and the Vulgate render this 'her *bars*,' and it has been explained as meaning that the voice of the prophet, lamenting the calamity of Moab, could be heard as far as the *bars*, or gates, of Zoar; or that the word *bars* means *princes*, *i.e.*, protectors, a figure similar to *shields of the land* (Ps. xlvii. 10; Hos. iv. 18.) The LXX. render it, Ἐν αὐτῇ—'The voice of Moab in her is heard to Zoar.' But the more correct rendering is, undoubtedly, that of our translation, referring to the fugitives who should attempt to make their escape from Moab when the calamities should come upon her. ¶ *Unto Zoar.* Zoar was a small town in the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, to which Lot fled when Sodom was

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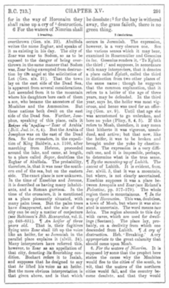

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for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of [1] destruction.

6 For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate:[2] for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing.

1 breaking. 2 desolations.

overthrown (Gen. xix. 23). Abulfeda writes the name Zoghar, and speaks of it as existing in his day. The city of Zoar was near to Sodom, so as to be exposed to the danger of being overthrown in the same manner that Sodom was, Zoar being exempted from destruction by the angel at the solicitation of Lot (Gen. xix. 21). That the town lay on the east side of the Dead Sea, is apparent from several considerations. Lot ascended from it to the mountain where his daughters bore each of them a son, who became the ancestors of the Moabites and the Ammonites. But these nations both dwelt on the east side of the Dead Sea. Further, Josephus, speaking of this place, calls it Ζόαρα τῆς Ἀραβίας—'Zoar of Arabia' (*Bell. Jud.* iv. 8, 4). But the Arabia of Josephus was on the east of the Dead Sea. So the crusaders, in the expedition of King Baldwin, A.D. 1100, after marching from Hebron, proceeded around the lake, and came, at length, to a place called *Segor*, doubtless the Zoghar of Abulfeda. The probability, therefore, is, that it was near the southern end of the sea, but on the eastern side. The exact place is now unknown. In the time of Eusebius and Jerome, it is described as having many inhabitants, and a Roman garrison. In the time of the crusaders, it is mentioned as a place pleasantly situated, with many palm trees. But the palm trees have disappeared, and the site of the city can be only a matter of conjecture (see Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 648–651). ¶ *An heifer of three years old.* That is, their fugitives flying unto Zoar shall lift up the voice like an heifer, for so Jeremiah in the parallel place explains it (xlviii. 34). Many interpreters have referred this, however, to Zoar as an appellation of that city, denoting its flourishing condition. Bochart refers it to Isaiah, and supposes that he designed to say that *he* lifted his voice as an heifer. But the more obvious interpretation is that given above, and is that which occurs in Jeremiah. The expression, however, is a very obscure one. See the various senses which it may bear, examined in Rosenmüller and Gesenius *in loc.* Gesenius renders it, 'To Eglath the third;' and supposes, in accordance with many interpreters, that it denotes a place called *Eglath*, called the third in distinction from two other places of the same name; though he suggests that the common explanation, that it refers to a heifer of the age of three years, may be defended. In the third year, says he, the heifer was most vigorous, and hence was used for an offering (Gen. xv. 9). Until that age she was accustomed to go unbroken, and bore no yoke (Pliny, 8, 4, 5). If this refers to Moab, therefore, it may mean that hitherto it was vigorous, unsubdued, and active; but that now, like the heifer, it was to be broken and brought under the yoke by chastisement. The expression is a very difficult one, and it is impossible, perhaps, to determine what is the true sense. ¶ *By the mounting up of Luhith.* The *ascent* of Luhith. It is evident, from Jer. xlviii. 5, that it was a mountain, but where, is not clearly ascertained. Eusebius supposes it was a place between Areopolis and Zoar (see Reland's *Palestine*, pp. 577–579). The whole region there is mountainous. ¶ *In the way of Horonaim.* This was, doubtless, a town of Moab, but where it was situated is uncertain. The word means *two holes*. The region abounds to this day with caves, which are used for dwellings (Seetzen). The place lay, probably, on a declivity from which one descended from Luhith. ¶ *A cry of destruction.* Heb. 'Breaking.' A cry *appropriate* to the great calamity that should come upon Moab.

6. *For the waters of Nimrim.* It is supposed by some that the prophet here states the cause why the Moabites would flee to the cities of the south, to wit, that the *waters* of the northern cities would fail, and the country become desolate, and that they would

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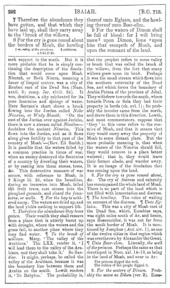

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7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the [1] brook of the willows.

8 For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab, the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

9 For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more[2] upon Dimon, lions [a] upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

1 or, valley of the Arabians. 2 additions.
a 2 Ki.17.25.

seek support in the south. But it is more probable that he is simply continuing the description of the desolation that would come upon Moab. Nimrah, or Beth Nimra, meaning *a house of limpid waters*, was a city of Reuben east of the Dead Sea (Num. xxxii. 3; comp. Jer. xlviii. 34). It was, doubtless, a city celebrated for its pure fountains and springs of water. Here Seetzen's chart shows a brook flowing into the Jordan called *Nahr Nimrim*, or *Wady Shoaib*. 'On the east of the Jordan over against Jericho, there is now a stream called *Nimlim*—doubtless the ancient *Nimrim*. This flows into the Jordan, and as it flows along gives fertility to that part of the country of Moab.'—(Rev. Eli Smith.) It is possible that the waters failed by a common practice in times of war, when an enemy destroyed the fountains of a country by diverting their waters, or by casting into them stones, trees, &c. This destructive measure of war occurs, with reference to Moab, in 2 Kings iii. 25, when the Israelites, during an incursion into Moab, felled the fruit trees, cast stones into the ploughed grounds, and *closed the fountains, or wells*. ¶ *For the hay is withered away.* The waters are dried up, and the land yields nothing to support life.

7. *Therefore the abundance they have gotten.* Their wealth they shall remove from a place that is utterly burnt up with drought, where the waters and the grass fail, to another place where they may find water. ¶ *To the brook of willows.* Marg. 'The valley of the Arabians.' The LXX. render it, 'I will lead them to the valley of the Arabians, and they shall take it.' So Saadias. It might, perhaps, be called the valley of the Arabians, because it was the boundary line between them and Arabia on the south. Lowth renders it, 'To Babylon.' The probability is, that the prophet refers to some valley or brook that was called the brook of the willows, from the fact that many willows grew upon its bank. Perhaps it was the small stream which flows into the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and which forms the boundary of Arabia Petrea of the province of Jebal. They withdrew towards the south, where towards Petra or Sela they had their property in herds (ch. xvi. 1); for probably the invader came from the north, and drove them in this direction. Lowth, and most commentators, suppose that 'they' in this verse refers to the enemies of Moab, and that it means that they would carry away the property of Moab to some distant place. But the more probable meaning is, that when the waters of the Nimrim should fail, they would remove to a place better watered; that is, they would leave their former abode, and wander away. It is an image of the desolation that was coming upon the land.

8. *For the cry is gone round about,* &c. The cry of distress and calamity has encompassed the whole land of Moab. There is no part of the land which is not filled with lamentation and distress. ¶ *The howling.* The voice of wailing on account of the distress. ¶ *Unto Eglaim.* This was a city of Moab east of the Dead Sea, which, Eusebius says, was eight miles south of Ar, and hence, says Rosenmüller, it was not far from the south border of Moab. It is mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* xiv. 1), as one of the twelve cities in that region which was overthrown by Alexander the Great. ¶ *Unto Beer-elim.* Literally, *the well of the princes.* Perhaps the same as that mentioned in Num. xxi. 14–18, as being in the land of Moab, and near to Ar:

The princes digged the well,
The nobles of the people digged it.

9. *For the waters of Dimon.* Probably the same as *Dibon* (ver. 2). Euse-

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the Nabatea considered both by geographers, historians, and poets, as the source of all the precious commodities of the East. The caravans in all ages, from Minea in the interior of Arabia, and from Gerka on the gulf of Persia, from Hadramont on the ocean, and some even from Sabea in Yemen, appear to have pointed to Petra as a common centre; and from Petra the trade seems to have branched out into every direction—to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, through Arsinoe, Gaza, Tyre, Jerusalem, Damascus, and a variety of intermediate roads that all terminated on the Mediterranean. Strabo relates, that the merchandise of India and Arabia was transported on camels from Leuke Kome to Petra, and thence to Rhinocolura and other places (xvi. 4, 18, 23, 24). Under the Romans the trade was still more prosperous. The country was rendered more accessible, and the passage of merchants facilitated by military ways, and by the establishment of military posts to keep in check the predatory hordes of the neighbouring deserts. One great road, of which traces still remain, went from Petra to Damascus; another went off from this road west of the Dead Sea to Jerusalem, Askelon, and other parts of the Mediterranean (Laborde, p. 213; Burckhardt, 374, 419). At a period subsequent to the Christian era there always reigned at Petra, according to Strabo, a king of the royal lineage, with whom a prince was associated in the government (Strabo, p. 779). The very situation of this city, once so celebrated, as has been remarked above, was long unknown. Burckhardt, under the assumed name of Sheikh Ibrahim, in the year 1811, made an attempt to reach Petra under the pretext that he had made a vow to sacrifice a goat in honour of Aaron on the summit of Mount Hor near to Petra. He was permitted to enter the city, and to remain there a short time, and to *look* upon the wonders of that remarkable place, but was permitted *to* make no notes or drawings on the spot. His object was supposed to be to obtain treasures, which the Arabs believe to have been deposited there in great abundance, as all who visit the ruins of ancient cities and towns in that region are regarded as having come there solely for that purpose. If assured that they have no such design, and if the Arabs are reminded that they have no means to remove them, it is replied 'that, although they may not remove them in their presence, yet when they return to their own land, they will have the power of *commanding* the treasures to be conveyed to them, and it will be done by magic.'—(Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria*, pp. 428, 429.)

Ruins of a Triumphal Arch (Petra).

Burckhardt's description of this city, as it is brief, may be here given *verbatim*:—'Two long days' journey north-east from Akaba [a town at the extremity of the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea, near the site of the ancient Eziongeber], is a brook called Wady Musa, and a valley of the same name. This place is very remarkable for its antiquities, and the remains of an ancient city, which I take to be Petra, the capital of Arabia Petrea, a place which, so far as I know, no European traveller has ever explored. In the red sandstone of which the vale consists, there are found more than two hundred and fifty sepulchres, which are entirely hewn out of the rock, generally with architectural ornaments in the Grecian style. There is found there a mausoleum in the form of a temple [obviously the same which Legh and Laborde call the temple of victory], on a colossal scale, which is likewise hewn out of the rock, with all its apartments, portico, peristylum, &c. It is an extremely fine monument of Grecian architecture, and in a fine state

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of preservation. In the same place there are yet other mausoleums with obelisks, apparently in the Egyptian style; a whole amphitheatre hewn out of the solid rock, and the remains of a palace and many temples.'

Temple in Rock (Petra).

Mr. Bankes, in company of Mr. Legh, and Captains Irby and Mangles, have the merit of being the first persons who, as Europeans, succeeded to any extent in making researches in Petra. Captains Irby and Mangles spent two days amongst its temples, tombs, and ruins, and have furnished a description of what they saw. But the most full and satisfactory investigation which has been made of these ruins, was made by M. de Laborde, who visited the city in 1829, and was permitted to remain there eight days, and to examine it at leisure. An account of his journey, with splendid plates, was published in Paris in 1830, and a translation in London in 1836. To this interesting account the reader must be referred. It can only be remarked here, that Petra, or Sela, was a city entirely encompassed with lofty rocks, except in a single place, where was a deep ravine between the rocks which constituted the principal entrance. On the east and west it was enclosed with lofty rocks, of from three to five hundred feet in height; on the north and south the ascent was gradual from the city to the adjacent hills. The ordinary entrance was through a deep ravine, which has been, until lately, supposed to have been the only way of access to the city. This ravine approaches it from the east, and is about a mile in length. In the narrowest part it is twelve feet in width, and the rocks are on each side about three hundred feet in height. On the northern side, there are tombs excavated in the rocks nearly the entire distance. The stream which watered Petra runs along in the bottom of the ravine, going through the city, and descending through a ravine to the west (see Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 514, 538). Of this magnificent entrance, the following cut will furnish an illustration. The city is wholly uninhabited, except when the wandering Arab makes use of an excavated tomb or palace in which to pass the night, or a caravan pauses there. The rock which encompasses it is a soft freestone. The tombs, with which almost the entire city was encompassed, are cut in the solid rock, and are adorned in the various modes of Grecian and Egyptian architecture. The surface of the solid rock was first made smooth, and then a plan of the tomb or temple was drawn on the smoothed surface, and the workmen began at the top and cut the various pillars, entablatures, and capitals. The tomb was then excavated from the rock, and was usually entered by a single door. Burckhardt counted two hundred and fifty of these tombs, and Laborde has described minutely a large number of them. For a description of these splendid monuments, the reader must be referred to the work of Laborde, pp. 152–193. Lond. Ed.

Entrance to a Rock-hewn Tomb (Petra).

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2 For it shall be, *that* as a wandering bird cast [1] out of the nest, *so* the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of [a] Arnon.

3 Take [2] counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth.

[1] or, *a nest forsaken.* [a] Num.21.13. [2] bring.

That this is the Sela referred to here there can be no doubt; and the discovery of this place is only one of the instances out of many, in which the researches of oriental travellers contribute to throw light on the geography of the Scriptures, or otherwise illustrate them. For a description of this city, see Stephen's *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petrea, and the Holy Land*, vol. ii. ch. iv. p. 65, *sq.*; the work of Laborde referred to above; and Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 573–580, 653–659. ¶ *To the mount of the daughter of Zion.* To Mount Zion; *i.e.*, to Jerusalem (Note, ch. i. 8). The meaning of this verse, therefore, is, 'Pay the accustomed tribute to the Jews. Continue to seek their protection, and acknowledge your subjection to them, and you shall be safe. They will yield you protection, and these threatened judgments will not come upon you. But refuse, or withhold this, and you will be overthrown.'

2. *For it shall be.* It shall happen in the time of the calamity that shall come upon Moab. ¶ *As a wandering bird.* (See ch. x. 14.) The same idea is presented in Prov. xxvii. 8:

As a bird that wanders from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place.

The idea here is that of a bird driven away from her nest, where the nest is destroyed, and the young fly about without any home or place of rest. So would Moab be when the inhabitants were driven from their dwellings. The reason why this is introduced seems to be, to enforce what the prophet had said in the previous verse—the duty of paying the usual tribute to the Jews, and seeking their protection. The time is coming, says the prophet, when the Moabites shall be driven from their homes, and when they will need that protection which they can obtain by paying the usual tribute to the Jews. ¶ *The daughters of Moab.* The females shall be driven from their homes, and shall wander about, and endeavour to flee from the invasion which has come upon the land. By the apprehension, therefore, that their wives and daughters would be exposed to this danger, the prophet calls upon the Moabites to secure the protection of the king of Judah. ¶ *At the fords of Arnon.* Arnon was the northern boundary of the land of Moab. They would endeavour to cross that river, and thus flee from the land, and escape the desolations that were coming upon it. The river Arnon, now called Mujeb, flows in a deep, frightfully wild, and rocky vale of the same name (Num. xxi. 15; Deut. ii. 24; iii. 9), in a narrow bed, and forms at this time the boundary between the provinces of Belka and Karrak (Seetzen). Bridges were not common in the times here referred to; and, indeed, permanent bridges among the ancients were things almost unknown. Hence they selected the places where the streams were most shallow and gentle, as the usual places of crossing.

3. *Take counsel.* Heb. 'Bring counsel;' or cause it to come (הביאו, or as it is in the *keri*, הביאי). The Vulgate renders this in the singular number, and so is the *keri*, and so many MSS. J. D. Michaelis, Lowth, Eichhorn, Gesenius, and Noyes, regard verses 3–5 as a supplicatory address of the fugitive Moabites to the Jews to take them under their protection, and as imploring a blessing on the Jewish people if they would do it; and ver. 6 as the negative answer of the Jews, or as a refusal to protect them on account of their pride. But most commentators regard it as addressed to the Moabites by the prophet, or by the Jews, calling upon the Moabites to afford such protection to the Jews who might be driven from their homes as to secure their favour, and confirm the alliance between them; and ver. 6 as an intimation of the prophet, that the pride of Moab is such that there is no reason to suppose the

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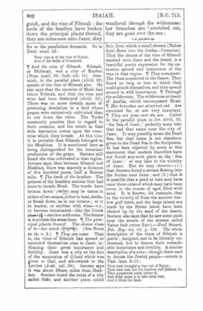

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guish, *and* the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderness: her branches are [1] stretched out, they are gone over the sea:

[1] or, plucked up.

for so the parallelism demands. So in Deut. xxxii. 32:

Their vine is of the vine of Sodom,
And of the fields of Gomorrah.

¶ And *the vine of Sibmah*. Sibmah, or Shibmah, was a city of Reuben (Num. xxxii. 38; Josh. xiii. 19). Jeremiah, in the parallel place (xlviii. 32) speaks of the vine of Sibmah also. He also says that the enemies of Moab had taken Sibmah, and that the vine and wine had been destroyed (xlviii. 33). There was no more certain mode of producing desolation in a land where grapes were extensively cultivated than to cut down the vines. The Turks constantly practise that in regard to their enemies, and the result is, that wide desolation comes upon the countries which they invade. At this time it is probable that Sibmah belonged to the Moabites. It is mentioned here as being distinguished for the luxuriant production of the grape. Seetzen still found the vine cultivated in that region. Jerome says, that between Sibmah and Heshbon there was scarcely a distance of five hundred paces, half a Roman mile. ¶ *The lords of the heathen*. The princes of the heathen nations that had come to invade Moab. The words 'have broken down' (הָלְמוּ) may be taken in either of two senses, either to beat, strike, or break down, as in our version; or *to be* beaten, or smitten with wine—*i.e.*, to become intoxicated—like the Greek οἰνοπλὴξ—*smitten with wine*. The former is doubtless the sense here. ¶ *The principal plants thereof*. The choice vines of it—*her sorek* (שְׂרוּקֶּיהָ). (See Notes on ch. v. 2.) ¶ *They are come*. That is, the vines of Sibmah had spread or extended themselves even to Jazer, indicating their great luxuriance and fertility. Jazer was a city at the foot of the mountains of Gilead which was given to Gad, and afterwards to the Levites (Josh. xxi. 39). Jerome says it was about fifteen miles from Heshbon. Seetzen found the ruins of a city called Szâr, and another place called Szir, from which a small stream (Nahar Szir) flows into the Jordan (Gesenius). That the shoots of the vine of Sibmah reached unto Jazer and the desert, is a beautiful poetic expression for the extensive spread and luxuriance of the vine in that region. ¶ *They wandered*. The vines *wandered* in the desert. They found no twig or tree to which they could attach themselves, and they spread around in wild luxuriancy. ¶ Through *the wilderness*. The wilderness or desert of Arabia, which encompassed Moab. ¶ *Her branches are stretched out*. Are extended far, or are very luxuriant. ¶ *They are gone over the sea*. Called in the parallel place in Jer. xlviii. 32, 'the Sea of Jazer;' probably some lake that had that name near the city of Jazer. It may *possibly* mean the Dead Sea, but that name is not elsewhere given to the Dead Sea in the Scriptures. It has been objected by some to this statement that modern travellers have not found any such place as the 'Sea of Jazer;' or any lake in the vicinity of Jazer. But we may observe—(1.) that Seetzen found a stream flowing into the Jordan near Jazer; and (2.) that it is possible that a pond or lake may have once there existed which may have been since, in the course of ages, filled with sand. It is known, for example, that in the vicinity of Suez the ancient narrow gulf there, and the large inland sea made by the Bitter lakes, have been choked up by the sand of the desert. Seetzen also says that he saw some pools near the source of the stream called Nahar Szir (*river Szir*).—Prof. Stuart. *Bib. Rep.* vol. vii. p. 158. The whole description of the vines of Sibmah is poetic; designed, not to be literally understood, but to denote their remarkable luxuriance and fertility. A similar description of a *vine*—though there used to denote the Jewish people—occurs in Psal. lxxx. 8–11:

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt;
Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it;
Thou preparedst room before it,
And didst cause it to take deep root,
And it filled the land.

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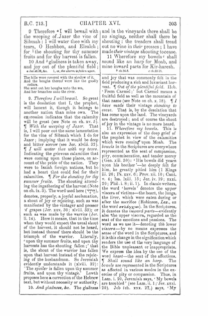

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XVI. 303

9 Therefore [a] I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for [1] the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen.

10 And [b] 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.

11 Wherefore my bowels [c] shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

a Jer. 48. 32, &c. 1 or, the alarm is fallen upon. b ch. 24. 8. c ch. 63. 15.

The hills were covered with the shadow of it,
And the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.
She sent out her boughs unto the sea,
And her branches unto the *river*.

9. *Therefore I will bewail*. So great is the desolation that I, the prophet, will lament it, though it belongs to another nation than mine own. The expression indicates that the calamity will be great (see Note on ch. xv. 5). ¶ *With the weeping of Jazer*. That is, I will pour out the same lamentation for the vine of Sibmah which I do for Jazer; implying that it would be deep and bitter sorrow (see Jer. xlviii. 32). ¶ *I will water thee with my tears*. Indicating the grievous calamities that were coming upon those places, on account of the pride of the nation. They were to Isaiah foreign nations, but he had a heart that could feel for their calamities. ¶ *For the shouting for thy summer fruits*. The shouting attending the ingathering of the harvest (Note on ch. ix. 3). The word used here (הֵידָד), denotes, properly, a joyful acclamation, a shout of joy or rejoicing, such as was manifested by the vintager and presser of grapes (Jer. xxv. 30; xlviii. 33); or such as was made by the warrior (Jer. li. 14). Here it means, that in the time when they would expect the usual shout of the harvest, it should not be heard, but instead thereof there should be the triumph of the warrior. Literally, 'upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy harvests has the shouting fallen;' that is, the shout of the warrior has fallen upon that harvest instead of the rejoicing of the husbandman. So Jeremiah evidently understands it (xlviii. 32): 'The *spoiler* is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage.' Lowth proposes here a correction of the Hebrew text, but without necessity or authority.

10. *And gladness, &c*. The gladness and joy that was commonly felt in the field producing a rich and luxuriant harvest. ¶ *Out of the plentiful field*. Heb. 'From Carmel;' but Carmel means a fruitful field as well as the mountain of that name (see Note on ch. x. 18). ¶ *I have made their vintage shouting to cease*. That is, by the desolation that has come upon the land. The vineyards are destroyed; and of course the shout of joy in the vintage is no more heard.

11. *Wherefore my bowels*. This is also an expression of the deep grief of the prophet in view of the calamities which were coming upon Moab. The *bowels* in the Scriptures are everywhere represented as the seat of compassion, pity, commiseration, and tender mercy (Gen. xliii. 30): 'His bowels did yearn upon his brother'—he deeply felt for him, he greatly pitied him (1 Kings iii. 26; Ps. xxv. 6; Prov. xii. 10; Cant. v. 4; Isa. lxiii. 15; Jer. iv. 19; xxxi. 20; Phil. i. 8; ii. 1). In classic writers, the word 'bowels' denotes the *upper* viscera of victims—the heart, the lungs, the liver, which were eaten during or after the sacrifice (Robinson, *Lex.*, on the word σπλάγχνον). In the Scriptures, it denotes the *inward parts*—evidently also the upper viscera, regarded as the seat of the emotions and passions. The word as we use it—denoting the lower *viscera*—by no means expresses the sense of the word in the Scriptures, and it is this change in the signification which renders the use of the very language of the Bible unpleasant or inappropriate. We express the idea by the use of the word *heart*—the seat of the affections. ¶ *Shall sound like an harp*. The *bowels* are represented in the Scriptures as affected in various modes in the exercise of pity or compassion. Thus, in Lam. i. 20, Jeremiah says, 'My bowels are troubled' (see Lam. ii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 20). Job (ch. xxx. 27,) says, 'My

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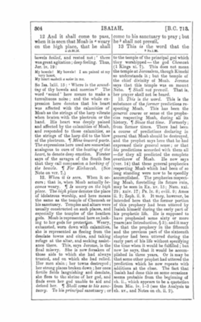

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12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is [a] weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he [b] shall not prevail.

13 This *is* the word that the

a ch. [illegible] b Ps. [illegible]

bowels *boiled*, and rested not;' there was great agitation; deep feeling. Thus, Jer. iv. 19:

My bowels! My bowels! I am pained at my very heart,
My heart maketh a noise in me.

So Isa. lxiii. 15: 'Where is the *sounding* of thy bowels and mercies?' The word 'sound' here means to make a tumultuous noise; and the whole expression here denotes that his heart was affected with the calamities of Moab as the strings of the harp vibrate when beaten with the plectrum or the hand. His heart was deeply pained and affected by the calamities of Moab, and responded to those calamities, as the strings of the harp did to the blow of the plectrum. ¶ *Mine inward parts*. The expressions here used are somewhat analogous to ours of the *beating of the heart*, to denote deep emotion. Forster says of the savages of the South Sea that they call compassion *a barking of the bowels*. ¶ *For Kirharesh*. (See Note on ver. 7.)

12. *When it is seen*. When it occurs; that is, when Moab actually *becomes* weary. ¶ *Is weary on the high place*. The *high place* denotes the place of idolatrous worship, and here means the same as the temple of Chemosh or his sanctuary. Temples and altars were usually constructed on such places, and especially the temples of the heathen gods. Moab is represented here as looking to her gods for protection. Weary, exhausted, worn down with calamities, she is represented as fleeing from the desolate towns and cities, and taking refuge at the altar, and seeking assistance there. This, says Jerome, is the final misery. She is now forsaken of those aids to which she had always trusted, and on which she had relied. Her men slain; her towns destroyed; her strong places broken down; her once fertile fields languishing and desolate, she flees to the shrine of her god, and finds even her god unable to aid and defend her. ¶ *Shall come to his sanctuary*. To his *principal* sanctuary; or to the temple of the principal god which they worshipped—the god *Chemosh* (1 Kings xi. 7). This does not mean the temple at Jerusalem, though Kimchi so understands it; but the temple of the chief divinity of Moab. Jerome says that this temple was on mount Nebo. ¶ *Shall not prevail*. That is, her prayer shall not be heard.

13. *This is the word*. This is the substance of the *former* predictions respecting Moab. This has been the *general course* or sense of the prophecies respecting Moab, during all its history. ¶ *Since that time*. Formerly; from former times. There had been a course of predictions declaring in general that Moab should be destroyed, and the prophet says here that he had expressed their *general sense*; or that *his* predictions accorded with them all—for they all predicted the complete overthrow of Moab. He now says (ver. 14) that these general prophecies respecting Moab which had been of so long standing were now to be speedily accomplished. The prophecies respecting Moab, foretelling its future ruin, may be seen in Ex. xv. 15; Num. xxi. 29; xxiv. 17; Ps. lx. 8; cviii. 9; Amos ii. 2; Zeph. ii. 9. It *may*, however, be intended here that the former portion of this prophecy had been uttered by Isaiah himself during the early part of his prophetic life. He is supposed to have prophesied some sixty or more years (*see* Introduction, § 3); and it may be that the prophecy in the fifteenth and the previous part of the sixteenth chapter had been uttered during the early part of his life without specifying the time when it would be fulfilled; but now he says, that it would be accomplished in three years. Or it may be that some other prophet had uttered the prediction which he now repeats with additions at the close. The fact that Isaiah had done this on some occasions seems probable from the beginning of ch. ii., which appears to be a quotation from Mic. iv. 1–3 (see the Analysis to ch. xv., and Notes on ch. ii. 2).

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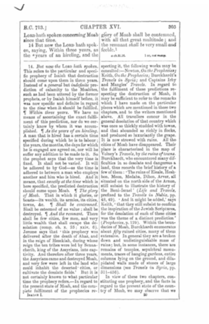

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XVI. 305

LORD hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

14 But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the ᵃyears 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.[1]

a ch.21.16. 1 or, not many.

14. *But now the LORD hath spoken.* This refers to the particular and specific prophecy of Isaiah that destruction should come upon them in three years. Instead of a *general* but *indefinite* prediction of calamity to the Moabites, such as had been uttered by the former prophets, or by Isaiah himself before, it was now specific and definite in regard to the *time* when it should be fulfilled. ¶ *Within three years.* We have no means of ascertaining the exact fulfilment of this prediction, nor do we certainly know by whom it was accomplished. ¶ *As the years of an hireling.* A man that is hired has a certain time specified during which he is to labour; the years, the months, the days *for* which he is engaged are agreed on, nor will he suffer any addition to be made to it. So the prophet says that the very time is fixed. It shall not be varied. It will be adhered to by God—as the time is adhered to between a man who employs another and him who is hired. And it means, that *exactly at the time* which is here specified, the predicted destruction should come upon Moab. ¶ *The glory of Moab.* That in which it glories, or boasts—its wealth, its armies, its cities, towns, &c. ¶ *Shall be contemned.* Shall be esteemed of no value; shall be destroyed. ¶ *And the remnant.* There shall be few cities, few men, and very little wealth that shall escape the desolation (comp. ch. x. 25; xxiv. 6). Jerome says that 'this prophecy was delivered after the death of Ahaz, and in the reign of Hezekiah, during whose reign the ten tribes were led by Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, into captivity. And therefore after three years, the Assyrians came and destroyed Moab, and very few were left in the land who could inhabit the deserted cities, or cultivate the desolate fields.' But it is not certainly known to what particular time the prophecy refers.—In regard to the present state of Moab, and the complete fulfilment of the prophecies respecting it, the following works may be consulted:—Newton, *On the Prophecies;* Keith, *On the Prophecies;* Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria;* and Captains Irby and Mangles' *Travels.* In regard to the fulfilment of these predictions respecting the destruction of Moab, it may be sufficient to refer to the remarks which I have made on the particular places which are mentioned in these two chapters, and to the writers mentioned above. All travellers concur in the general desolation of that country which was once so thickly studded with towns, and that abounded so richly in flocks, and produced so luxuriantly the grape. It is now strewed with ruins. All the cities of Moab have disappeared. Their place is characterized in the map of Volney's *Travels,* by *the ruins of towns.* Burckhardt, who encountered many difficulties in so desolate and dangerous a land, thus records the brief history of a few of them: 'The ruins of Eleale, Heshbon, Meon, Medaba, Dibon, Arver, all situated on the north side of the Arnon, still subsist to illustrate the history of the Beni-Israel' (*Life and Travels,* prefixed to the *Travels in Nubia,* pp. 48, 49). 'And it might be added,' says Keith, 'that they still subsist to confirm the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures, for the desolation of each of these cities was the theme of a distinct prediction' (*Prophecies,* p. 129). Within the boundaries of Moab, Burckhardt enumerates about *fifty* ruined cities, many of them extensive. In general they are a broken down and undistinguishable mass of ruins; but, in some instances, there are remains of temples, sepulchral monuments, traces of hanging gardens, entire columns lying on the ground, and dilapidated walls made of stones of large dimensions (see *Travels in Syria,* pp. 311–456).

In view of these two chapters, constituting one prophecy, and the facts in regard to the present state of the country of Moab, we may observe that we

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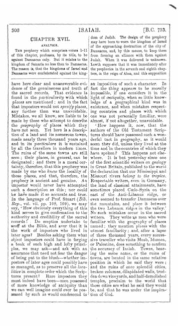

CHAPTER XVII.

ANALYSIS.

The prophecy which comprises verses 1-11 of this chapter, professes, by its title, to be against Damascus only. But it relates to the kingdom of Samaria no less than to Damascus. The reason is, that the kingdoms of Israel and Damascus were confederated against the kingdom of Judah. The design of the prophecy may have been to warn the kingdom of Israel of the approaching destruction of the city of Damascus, and, by this means, to keep them from forming an alliance with them against Judah. When it was delivered is unknown. Lowth supposes that it was immediately after the prophecies in the seventh and eighth chapters, in the reign of Ahaz, and this supposition

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have here clear and unanswerable evidence of the genuineness and truth of the sacred records. That evidence is found in the *particularity* with which *places* are mentioned; and in the fact that impostors would not *specify* places, any farther than was unavoidable. Mistakes, we all know, are liable to be made by those who attempt to describe the *geography* of places which they have not seen. Yet here is a description of a land and its numerous towns, made nearly three thousand years ago, and in its *particulars* it is sustained by all the travellers in modern times. The ruins of the same towns are still seen; their places, in general, can be designated; and there is a moral certainty, therefore, that this prophecy was made by one who *knew* the locality of those places, and that, therefore, the prophecy is ancient and genuine. An impostor would never have attempted such a description as this; nor could he have made it so accurate and true. In the language of Prof. Stuart (*Bib. Rep.*, vol. vii. pp. 108, 109), we may say, 'How obviously everything of this kind serves to give confirmation to the authority and credibility of the sacred records! Do sceptics undertake to scoff at the Bible, and aver that it is the work of impostors who lived in later ages? Besides asking them what *object* impostors could have in forging a book of such high and lofty principles, we may ask—and ask with an assurance that need not fear the danger of being put to the blush—whether impostors of later ages could possibly have so managed, as to preserve all the *localities* in complete order which the Scriptures present? Rare impostors they must indeed have been—men possessed of more knowledge of antiquity than we can well imagine could ever be possessed by such as would condescend to an imposition of such a character. In fact the thing appears to be *morally* impossible, if one considers it in the light of *antiquity*, when so little knowledge of a geographical kind was in existence, and when mistakes respecting countries and places with which one was not personally familiar, were almost, if not altogether, unavoidable.

'How happens it, now, that the authors of the Old Testament Scriptures should have possessed such a wonderful tact in geography, as it would seem they did, unless they lived at the time and in the countries of which they have spoken? This happens not elsewhere. It is but yesterday since one of the first scientific writers on geology in Great Britain, published to the world the declaration that our Mississippi and Missouri rivers *belong to the tropics*. Respectable writers, even in Germany, the land of classical attainments, have sometimes placed Cœle-Syria on the east of the Anti-Libanus ridge, or even seemed to transfer Damascus over the mountains, and place it between the two Lebanon ridges in the valley.' No such mistakes occur in the sacred writers. They write as men who were familiar with the geography of places named; they mention places with the utmost familiarity; and, after a lapse of three thousand years, every successive traveller who visits Moab, Idumea, or Palestine, does something to confirm the accuracy of Isaiah. Towns, bearing the same name, or the ruins of towns, are located in the same relative position in which he said they were; and the ruins of once splendid cities, broken columns, dilapidated walls, trodden down vineyards, and half-demolished temples, proclaim to the world that those cities are what he said they would be, and that he was under the inspiration of God.

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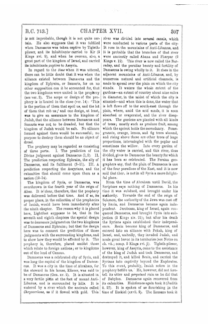

is not improbable, though it is not quite certain. He also supposes that it was fulfilled when Damascus was taken captive by Tiglath-pileser, and its inhabitants carried to Kir (2 Kings xvi. 9), and when he overran, also, a great part of the kingdom of Israel, and carried its inhabitants captive to Assyria.

In regard to the *time* when it was uttered, there can be little doubt that it was when the alliance existed between Damascus and the kingdom of Ephraim, or Samaria, for on no other supposition can it be accounted for, that the two kingdoms were united in the prophecy (see ver. 3). The scope or design of the prophecy is indicated in the close (ver. 14): 'This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us;' and one design, at least, was to give an assurance to the kingdom of Judah, that the alliance between Damascus and Samaria was not to be dreaded, but that the kingdom of Judah would be safe. No alliance formed against them would be successful; no purpose to destroy them should be an object of dread.

The prophecy may be regarded as consisting of three parts. I. The prediction of the Divine judgment against Damascus (1, 2). II. The prediction respecting Ephraim, the ally of Damascus, and its fulfilment (3-11). III. A prediction respecting the Assyrians, and the calamities that should come upon them as a nation (12-14).

The kingdom of Syria, or Damascus, was overthrown in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz. It is clear, therefore, that the prophecy was delivered before that time. And if so, its proper place, in the collection of the prophecies of Isaiah, would have been immediately after the ninth chapter. The reason why it is placed here, Lightfoot supposes to be, that in the seventh and eighth chapters the special design was to denounce judgment on the two kingdoms of Damascus and Ephraim; but that the design here was to connect the prediction of those judgments with the surrounding kingdoms, and to show how they would be affected by it. The prophecy is, therefore, placed amidst those which relate to foreign nations; or to kingdoms out of the land of Canaan.

Damascus was a celebrated city of Syria, and was long the capital of the kingdom of Damascus. It was a city in the time of Abraham, for the steward in his house, Eliezer, was said to be of Damascus (Gen. xv. 2). It is situated in a very fertile plain at the foot of mount Anti-Libanus, and is surrounded by hills. It is watered by a river which the ancients called *Chrysorrhoas*, as if it flowed with gold. This river was divided into several canals, which were conducted to various parts of the city. It rose in the mountains of Anti-Libanus, and it is probable that the branches of that river were anciently called Abana and Pharpar (2 Kings v. 12). This river is now called the Barradey, and the peculiar beauty and fertility of Damascus is owing wholly to it. It rises in the adjacent mountains of Anti-Libanus, and, by numerous natural and artificial channels, is made to spread over the plain on which the city stands. It waters the whole extent of the gardens—an extent of country about nine miles in diameter, in the midst of which the city is situated—and when this is done, the water that is left flows off to the south-east through the plain, where, amid the arid sands, it is soon absorbed or evaporated, and the river disappears. The gardens are planted with all kinds of trees; mostly such as produce fruit, among which the apricot holds the ascendancy. Pomegranate, orange, lemon, and fig trees abound, and rising above these are other trees of huge proportions, intermingled with the poplar and sometimes the willow. Into every garden of the city water is carried, and this river, thus divided, gives to Damascus the beauty for which it has been so celebrated. The Persian geographers say, that the plain of Damascus is one of the four paradises of the East, and it is now said that there is not in all Syria a more delightful place.

From the time of Abraham until David, the Scripture says nothing of Damascus. In his time it was subdued, and brought under his authority. Towards the end of the reign of Solomon, the authority of the Jews was cast off by Rezin, and Damascus became again independent. Jeroboam, king of Israel, again conquered Damascus, and brought Syria into subjection (2 Kings xiv. 25); but after his death the Syrians again established their independence. Rezin became king of Damascus, and entered into an alliance with Pekah, king of Israel, and, unitedly, they invaded Judah, and made great havoc in its territories (see Notes on ch. vii.; comp. 2 Kings xvi. 5). Tiglath-pileser, however, king of Assyria, came to the assistance of the king of Judah and took Damascus, and destroyed it, and killed Rezin, and carried the Syrians into captivity beyond the Euphrates. To this event, probably, Isaiah refers in the prophecy before us.' He, however, did not foretell its utter and *perpetual* ruin as he did that of Babylon. Damascus again recovered from its calamities. Holofernes again took it (Judith ii. 27). It is spoken of as flourishing in the time of Ezekiel (xxvii. 18). The Romans took it

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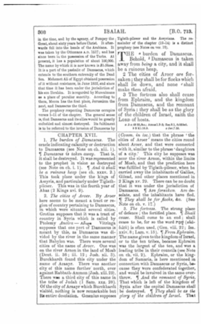

in the time, and by the agency, of Pompey the Great, about sixty years before Christ. It afterwards fell into the hands of the Arabians. It was taken by the Ottomans A.D. 1517; and has since been in the possession of the Turks. At present, it has a population of about 100,000. The name by which it is now known is *El-Sham*. It is a part of the pashalic of Damascus, which extends to the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. Mehemet Ali of Egypt obtained possession of it without resistance, in June 1832, and since that time it has been under the jurisdiction of his son Ibrahim. It is regarded by Mussulmans as a place of peculiar sanctity. According to them, Mecca has the first place, Jerusalem the next, and Damascus the third.

The prophecy respecting Damascus occupies verses 1-11 of the chapter. The general sense is, that Damascus and its allies would be greatly enfeebled and almost destroyed. Its fulfilment is to be referred to the invasion of Damascus by Tiglath-pileser and the Assyrians. The remainder of the chapter (12-14) is a distinct prophecy (see Notes on ver. 12).

THE [a] burden of Damascus. Behold, [b] Damascus is taken away from *being* a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

2 The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken; they shall be for flocks which shall lie down, and none [c] shall make *them* afraid.

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.

[a] Jer.49.23,&c.; Amos 1.3-5; Zec.9.1, fulfilled. [b] 2 K.16.9. [c] Jer.7.33.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. *The burden of Damascus.* The oracle indicating calamity or destruction to Damascus (see Note on ch. xiii. 1). ¶ *Damascus is taken away.* That is, it shall be destroyed. It was represented to the prophet in vision as destroyed (see Note on ch. i. 1). ¶ *And it shall be a ruinous heap* (see ch. xxxv. 2.) This took place under the kings of Assyria, and particularly under Tiglath-pileser. This was in the fourth year of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 9).

2. *The cities of Aroer.* By *Aroer* here seems to be meant a tract or region of country pertaining to Damascus, in which were situated several cities. Grotius supposes that it was a tract of country in Syria which is called by Ptolemy *Aueira*—Αὔειρα. Vitringa supposes that one part of Damascus is meant by this, as Damascus was divided by the river in the same manner that Babylon was. There were several cities of the name of *Aroer*. One was on the river Arnon in the land of Moab (Deut. ii. 36; iii. 12; Josh. xii. 3). Burckhardt found this city under the name of Araayr. There was another city of this name further north, over against Rabbath-Ammon (Josh. xiii. 25). There was a third city of this name in the tribe of Judah (1 Sam. xxx. 28). Of the city of Araayr which Burckhardt visited, nothing is now remarkable but its entire desolation. Gesenius supposes (*Comm. in loc.*) that the phrase 'the cities of Aroer' means the cities round about Aroer, and that were connected with it, similar to the phrase 'daughters of a city.' This city he supposes was near the river Arnon, within the limits of Moab, and that the prediction here was fulfilled by Tiglath-pileser, when he carried away the inhabitants of Galilee, Gilead, and other places mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 29. There can be no doubt that it was under the jurisdiction of Damascus. ¶ Are *forsaken*. Are desolate, and the inhabitants have fled. ¶ *They shall be for flocks,* &c. (See Note on ch. v. 17.)

3. *The fortress.* The strong place of defence; the fortified place. ¶ *Shall cease.* Shall come to an end; shall cease to be, for so the word שָׁבַת (*shâbăth*) is often used, (Gen. viii. 22; Isa. xxiv. 8; Lam. v. 15). ¶ *From Ephraim.* The name given to the kingdom of Israel, or to the ten tribes, because Ephraim was the largest of the ten, and was a leading tribe in their councils (see Note on ch. vii. 2). Ephraim, or the kingdom of Samaria, is here mentioned in connection with Damascus or Syria, because they were confederated together, and would be involved in the same overthrow. ¶ *And the remnant of Syria.* That which is left of the kingdom of Syria after the capital Damascus shall be destroyed. ¶ *They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel.* That

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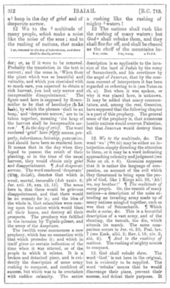

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a[1] heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

12 Wo to the [2] 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 [3] waters!

13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but *God*[a] shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains be-

[1] or, *removed in the day of inheritance, and there shall be deadly sorrow.*

[2] or, *noise.* [3] or, *many.* [a] Ps.9.5.

der; or, as if it were to be removed. Probably the translation in the text is correct; and the sense is, 'When from the plant which was so beautiful and valuable, and which you cherished with so much care, you expected to obtain a rich harvest, you had only sorrow and inexpressible disappointment.' The figure used here is supposed by Rosenmüller to be that of hendiadys (ἓν διὰ δυοῖν), by which the phrases 'shall be an heap,' and 'desperate sorrow,' are to be taken together, meaning 'the heap of the harvest shall be inexpressible sorrow.' ¶ *In the day of grief.* The word rendered 'grief' here (נַחֲלָה) means, properly, *inheritance, heirship, possession,* and should have been so rendered here. It means that in the day when they *hoped* to possess the result of their planting, or in the time of the usual harvest, they would obtain only grief and disappointment. ¶ *And desperate sorrow.* The word rendered 'desperate' (אָנוּשׁ, *ânûsh*), denotes that which is *weak, mortal, incurable* (Job xxxiv. 6; Jer. xvii. 16; xxx. 12, 15). The sense here is, that there would be grievous disappointment, and that there would be no remedy for it; and the idea of the whole is, that calamities were coming upon the nation which would blast all their hopes, and destroy all their prospects. The prophecy was fulfilled in the invasion by Tiglath-pileser, and the army of the Assyrians.

The twelfth verse commences a new prophecy, which has no connection with that which precedes it; and which in itself gives no certain indication of the time when it was uttered, or of the people to which it relates. It is a broken and detached piece, and is evidently the description of some army rushing to conquest, and confident of success, but which was to be overtaken with sudden calamity. The entire description is so applicable to the invasion of the land of Judah by the army of Sennacherib, and his overthrow by the angel of JEHOVAH, that by the common consent of interpreters it has been regarded as referring to it (see Notes on ch. x). But when it was spoken, or why it was placed here, is unknown. It may be added that many commentators, and, among the rest, Gesenius, have supposed that the following chapter is a part of this prophecy. The general sense of the prophecy is, that numerous hostile nations would overrun Palestine, but that JEHOVAH would destroy them all.

12. *Wo to the multitude, &c.* The word 'wo' (הוֹי *hôi*) may be either an interjection simply directing the attention to them, or it may be a word indicating approaching calamity and judgment (see Note on ch. v. 6). Gesenius supposes that it is rather the language of compassion, on account of the evil which they threatened to bring upon the people of God, like 1 Kings xiii. 30, 'Ah! wo, my brother!' ¶ *The multitude of many people.* Or, the tumult of many nations—a description of the noise attending an invading army made up of many nations mingled together, such as was that of Sennacherib. ¶ *Which make a noise, &c.* This is a beautiful description of a vast army, and of the shouting, the tumult, the din, which attends its march. The same comparison occurs in Jer. vi. 23; Psal. lxv. 7 (see Ezek. xliii. 2; Rev. i. 15; xiv. 2, xix. 6). ¶ *And to the rushing of nations.* The rushing of mighty armies to conquest.

13. God *shall rebuke them.* The word 'God' is not here in the original, but is evidently to be supplied. The word 'rebuke' means that he would disarrange their plans, prevent their success, and defeat their purposes. It

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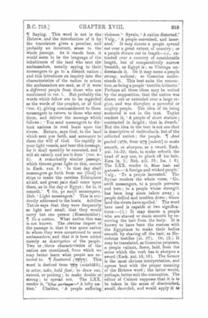

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¶ Saying. This word is not in the Hebrew, and the introduction of it by the translators gives a peculiar, and probably an incorrect, sense to the whole passage. As it stands here, it would seem to be the language of the inhabitants of the land who sent the ambassadors, usually saying to their messengers to go to a distant nation; and this introduces an inquiry into the characteristics of the nation to *whom* the ambassadors are sent, as if it were a *different* people from those who are mentioned in ver. 1. But probably the words which follow are to be regarded as the words of the prophet, or of God (ver. 4), giving commandment to those messengers to *return* to those who sent them, and deliver the message which follows: 'You send messengers to distant nations in reed boats upon the rivers. Return, says God, to the land which sent you forth, and announce to them the will of God. Go rapidly in your light vessels, and bear this message, for it shall speedily be executed, and I will sit calmly and see it done' (ver. 4–6). A remarkably similar passage, which throws great light on this, occurs in Ezek. xxx. 9: 'In that day shall messengers go forth from me [God] in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt; for lo, it cometh.' ¶ *Go, ye swift messengers.* Heb. 'Light messengers.' This is evidently addressed to the boats. Achilles Tatius says that they were frequently so light and small, that they would carry but one person (Rosenmüller). ¶ *To a nation.* What nation this was is not known. The *obvious* import of the passage is, that it was some nation to whom they were *accustomed* to send ambassadors, and that it is here added merely as *descriptive* of the people. Two or three characteristics of the nation are mentioned, from which we may better learn what people are referred to. ¶ *Scattered* (מְמֻשָּׁךְ). This word is derived from מָשַׁךְ (*mâshăkh*), *to seize, take, hold fast;* to draw out, extend, or prolong; to make double or strong; to spread out. The LXX. render it, Ἔθνος μετέωρον—'A lofty nation.' Chaldee, 'A people suffering violence.' Syriac, 'A nation distorted.' Vulg., 'A people convulsed, and lacerated.' It may denote a people *spread out* over a great extent of country; or a people *drawn out in length*—*i.e.*, extended over a country of considerable length, but of comparatively narrow breadth, as Egypt is; so Vitringa understands it. Or it may mean a people *strong, valiant;* so Gesenius understands it. This best suits the connection, as being a people 'terrible hitherto.' Perhaps all these ideas may be united by the supposition, that the nation was drawn out or extended over a large region, and was *therefore* a powerful or mighty people. The idea of its being *scattered* is not in the text. Taylor renders it, 'A people of short stature; contracted in height; that is, dwarfs.' But the idea in the text is not one that is descriptive of *individuals*, but of the *collected* nation; the people. ¶ *And peeled* (מוֹרָט, from מָרַט [*mârăṭ*] *to make smooth, or sharpen*, as a sword, Ezek. xxi. 14–32; then, to make smooth the head of any one, to pluck off his hair, Ezra ix. 3; Neh. xiii. 25; Isa. l. 6). The LXX. render it, ξένον λαὸν καὶ χαλεπόν—'A foreign and wicked people.' Vulg., 'To a people lacerated.' The Syriac renders the whole verse, 'Go, swift messengers, to a people perverse and torn; to a people whose strength has been long since taken away; a people defiled and trodden down; whose land the rivers have spoiled.' The word here used is capable of two significations:—(1.) It may denote a people who are shaved or made smooth by removing the hair from the body. It is known to have been the custom with the Egyptians to make their bodies smooth by shaving off the hair, as Herodotus testifies (xi. 37). Or, (2.) It may be translated, as Gesenius proposes, a people valiant, fierce, bold, from the sense which the verb has *to sharpen* a sword (Ezek. xxi. 15, 16). The former is the most obvious interpretation, and agrees best with the proper meaning of the Hebrew word; the latter would, perhaps, better suit the connection. The editor of Calmet supposes that it is to be taken in the sense of *diminished, small, dwarfish*, and would apply it to

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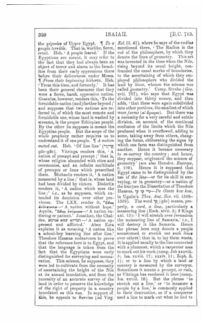

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the *pigmies* of Upper Egypt. ¶ *To a people terrible.* That is, warlike, fierce, cruel. Heb. 'A people feared.' If the Egyptians are meant, it may refer to the fact that they had always been an object of terror and alarm to the Israelites from their early oppressions there before their deliverance under Moses. ¶ *From their beginning hitherto.* Heb. 'From this time, and formerly.' It has been their general character that they were a fierce, harsh, oppressive nation. Gesenius, however, renders this, 'To the formidable nation (and) further beyond;' and supposes that two nations are referred to, of which the most remote and formidable one, whose land is washed by streams, is the proper Ethiopian people. By the other he supposes is meant the Egyptian people. But the scope of the whole prophecy rather requires us to understand it of one people. ¶ *A nation meted out.* Heb. 'Of line line' (קַו־קָו. *qâv-qâv*). Vitringa renders this, 'A nation of precept and precept;' that is, whose religion abounded with rites and ceremonies, and an infinite multitude of *precepts* or *laws* which prescribed them. Michaelis renders it, 'A nation measured by a line;' that is, whose land had been divided by victors. Döderlin renders it, 'A nation which uses the line;' *i.e.*, as he supposes, which extended its dominion over other provinces. The LXX. render it, Ἔθνος ἀνέλπιστον—'A nation without hope.' Aquila, Ἔθνος ὑπομένον—'A nation enduring or patient.' Jonathan, the Chaldee, עמא אניסא ובזיזא—'A nation oppressed and afflicted.' Aben Ezra explains it as meaning 'A nation like a school-boy learning line after line.' Theodore Hasæus endeavours to prove that the reference here is to Egypt, and that the language is taken from the fact that the Egyptians were early distinguished for surveying and mensuration. This science, he supposes, they were led to cultivate from the necessity of ascertaining the height of the Nile at its annual inundation, and from the necessity of an accurate survey of the land in order to preserve the knowledge of the right of property in a country inundated as this was. In support of this, he appeals to Servius (ad Virg. *Ecl.* iii. 41), where he says of the *radius* mentioned there, 'The Radius is the rod of the philosophers, by which they denote the lines of geometry. This art was invented in the time when the Nile, rising beyond its usual height, confounded the usual marks of boundaries, to the ascertaining of which they employed philosophers who divided the land by *lines*, whence the science was called geometry.' Comp. Strabo (*Geo.* xvii. 787), who says that Egypt was divided into thirty *nomes*, and then adds, 'that these were again subdivided into other portions, the smallest of which were *farms* (αἱ ἄρουραι). But there was a necessity for a very careful and subtle division, on account of the continual confusion of the limits which the Nile produced when it overflowed, adding to some, taking away from others, changing the forms, obliterating the signs by which one farm was distinguished from another. Hence it became necessary to re-survey the country; and hence, they suppose, originated the science of geometry' (see also Herodot. *Euterpe*, c. 109). Hence it is supposed that Egypt came to be distinguished by the use of *the line*—or for its skill in surveying, or in geometry—or a nation *of the line* (see the Dissertation of Theodore Hasæus, גוי קו קו—*De Gente kav kav*, in Ugolin's *Thes. Ant. Sac.* vii. 1568–1580). The word קַו (*qâv*) means, properly, *a cord, a line*, particularly a measuring line (Ezek. xlvii. 3; 2 Kings xxi. 13): 'I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria,' *i.e.*, I will destroy it like Samaria. Hence the phrase here may denote a people accustomed *to stretch out such lines* over others; that is, to lay them waste. It is applied usually to the line connected with a plummet, which a carpenter uses to mark out his work (comp. Job xxxviii. 5; Isa. xxviii. 17; xxxiv. 11; Zeph. ii. 1); or to a line by which a land or country is measured by the surveyor. Sometimes it means *a precept, or rule*, as Vitringa has rendered it here (comp. Isa. xxviii. 10). But the phrase 'to stretch out a line,' or 'to measure a people by a line,' is commonly applied to their destruction, as if a conqueror used a line to mark out what he had to

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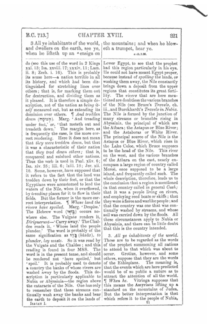

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3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an [a]ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

a ch. 5. 26.

do (see this use of the word in 2 Kings xxi. 13; Isa. xxviii. 17; xxxiv. 11; Lam. ii. 8; Zech. i. 16). This is probably its sense here—a nation terrible in all its history, and which had been distinguished for stretching lines over others; that is, for marking them out for destruction, and dividing them as it pleased. It is therefore a simple description, not of the nation as *being itself* measured out, but as extending its dominion over others. ¶ *And trodden down* (מְבוּסָה). Marg. 'And treading under foot,' or, 'that meteth out and treadeth down.' The margin here, as is frequently the case, is the more correct rendering. Here it does not mean that *they were trodden down*, but that it was a characteristic of their nation that *they trod down others;* that is, conquered and subdued other nations. Thus the verb is used in Psal. xliv. 6; Isa. xiv. 25; liii. 6; lxiii. 18; Jer. xii. 10. Some, however, have supposed that it refers to the fact that the land was trodden down by their feet, or that the Egyptians were accustomed to lead the waters of the Nile, when it overflowed, by *treading* places for it to flow in their fields. But the former is the more correct interpretation. ¶ *Whose land the rivers have spoiled.* Marg. 'Despise.' The Hebrew word (בָּזְאוּ) occurs nowhere else. The Vulgate renders it, *Diripuerunt*—'Carry away.' The Chaldee reads it, 'Whose land the people plunder.' The word is probably of the same signification as בָּזַז (*bâzăz*), *to plunder, lay waste.* So it was read by the Vulgate and the Chaldee; and this reading is found in four MSS. The word is in the present tense, and should be rendered not 'have spoiled,' but 'spoil.' It is probably used to denote a country the banks of whose rivers are washed away by the floods. This description is particularly applicable to Nubia or Abyssinia—the region above the cataracts of the Nile. One has only to remember that these streams continually wash away the banks and bear the earth to deposit it on the lands of Lower Egypt, to see that the prophet had this region particularly in his eye. He could not have meant Egypt proper, because instead of *spoiling* the lands, or washing them away, the Nile constantly brings down a deposit from the upper regions that constitutes its great fertility. The *rivers* that are here mentioned are doubtless the various branches of the Nile (see Bruce's *Travels*, ch. iii., and Burckhardt's *Travels in Nubia*. The Nile is formed by the junction of many streams or branches rising in Abyssinia, the principal of which are the Atbara; the Astapus or Blue River; and the Astaboras or White River. The principal source of the Nile is the Astapus or Blue River, which rises in the Lake Coloe, which Bruce supposes to be the head of the Nile. This river on the west, and the various branches of the Atbara on the east, nearly encompass a large region of country called Meroë, once supposed to be a large island, and frequently called such. The whole description, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that a region is mentioned in that country called in general *Cush;* that it was a people living on rivers, and employing reed boats or skiffs; that they were a fierce and warlike people; and that the country was one that was continually washed by streams, and whose soil was carried down by the floods. All these circumstances apply to Nubia or Abyssinia, and there can be little doubt that this is the country intended.

3. *All ye inhabitants of the world.* These are to be regarded as the words of the prophet summoning all nations to attend to that which was about to occur. Grotius, however, and some others, suppose that they are the words of the Ethiopians. The meaning is, that the events which are here predicted would be of so public a nature as to attract the attention of all the world. ¶ *When he.* Vitringa supposes that this means the Assyrians lifting up a standard on the mountains of Judea. But the better interpretation is that which refers it to the people of Nubia,

Isaiah I. 21

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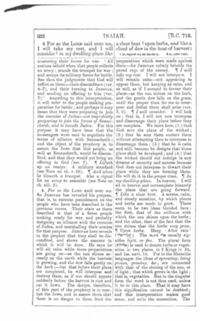

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4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider [1] in my dwelling-place like a clear heat [2] upon herbs, *and* like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest:

[1] or, *regard my set dwelling.* [2] or, *after rain.*

mustering their forces for war. 'All nations behold when that people collects an army; sounds the trumpet for war; and arrays its military forces for battle. See then the judgments that God will inflict on them—their discomfiture (ver. 4–7), and their turning to JEHOVAH, and sending an offering to him (ver. 7).' According to this interpretation, it will refer to the people making preparation for battle; and perhaps it may mean that they were preparing to join the enemies of Judea—*not improbably preparing to join the forces of Sennacherib, and to invade Judea.* For this purpose it may have been that the messengers were sent to negotiate the terms of alliance with Sennacherib; and the object of the prophecy is, to assure the Jews that this people, as well as Sennacherib, would be discomfited, and that they would yet bring an offering to God (ver. 7). ¶ *Lifteth up an ensign.* A military standard (see Note on ch. v. 26). ¶ *And when he bloweth a trumpet.* Also a signal for an army to assemble (see Note on ch. xiii. 2).

4. *For so the* LORD *said unto me.* So JEHOVAH has revealed his purpose, that is, to execute punishment on the people who have been described in the previous verses. Their state as there described is that of a fierce people making ready for war, and probably designing an alliance with the enemies of Judea, and marshalling their armies for that purpose. JEHOVAH here reveals to the prophet that they shall be discomfited, and shows the manner in which it will be done. He says he will sit calm while these preparations are going on—as the sun shines serenely on the earth while the harvest is growing, and the dew falls gently on the herb;—but that *before* their plans are completed, he will interpose and destroy them, as if one should appear suddenly before the harvest is ripe and cut it down. The *design*, therefore, of this part of the prophecy is to comfort the Jews, and to assure them that there is no danger to them from the preparations which were made against them—for JEHOVAH calmly beholds the proud rage of the enemy. ¶ *I will take my rest.* I will not interpose. I will remain calm—not appearing to oppose them, but keeping as calm, and as still, as if I seemed to favour their plans—as the sun shines on the herb, and the gentle dew falls on the grass, until the proper time for me to interpose and defeat them shall arise (ver. 5, 6). ¶ *I will consider.* I will look on; that is, I will not now interpose and disarrange their plans before they are complete. We learn here, (1.) that God *sees* the plans of the wicked; (2.) that he sees them *mature* them without attempting then to interpose to disarrange them; (3.) that he is calm and still, because he designs that those plans shall be developed; and (4.) that the wicked should not indulge in any dreams of security and success because God does not interpose to thwart their plans while they are forming them. He will do it in the proper time. ¶ *In my dwelling-place.* In heaven. I will sit in heaven and contemplate leisurely the plans that are going forward. ¶ *Like a clear heat.* A serene, calm, and steady sunshine, by which plants and herbs are made to grow. There seem to be two ideas blended here: the first, that of the *stillness* with which the sun shines upon the herbs; and the other, that of the fact that the sun shines that the herbs *may grow.* ¶ *Upon herbs.* Marg. 'After rain' ([illegible]). The word [illegible] usually signifies *light*, or *fire*. The plural form ([illegible]) is used to denote herbs or vegetables in two places, in 2 Kings iv. 39, and Isa. xxvi. 19. For in the Shemitic languages the ideas of *sprouting, being grown, growing,* &c., are connected with that of the shining of the sun, or of light; that which grows in the light; that is, vegetables. But in the singular form the word is not thus used, unless it be in this place. That it may have this signification cannot be doubted; and this interpretation makes good sense, and suits the connection. The

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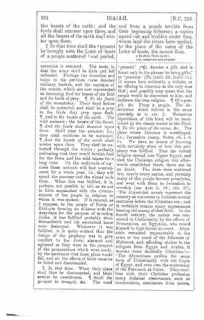

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the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

7 In that time shall the [a] present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered [1] 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.

[a] Ps.68.31; 72.10; ch.16.1.
[1] or, *outspread and polished.*

narration is resumed. The sense is, that the army shall be slain and left unburied. Perhaps the *branches* and *twigs* in the previous verse denoted military leaders, and the captains of the armies, which are now represented as becoming food for beasts of the field and for birds of prey. ¶ *To the fowls of the mountains.* Their dead bodies shall be unburied, and shall be a prey to the birds that prey upon flesh. ¶ *And to the beasts of the earth.* The wild animals; the beasts of the forest. ¶ *And the fowls shall summer upon them.* Shall pass the summer, *i.e.*, they shall continue to be unburied. ¶ *And the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.* They shall be unburied through the winter; probably indicating that they would furnish food for the fowls and the wild beasts for a long time. On the multitude of carcases these animals will find nourishment for a whole year, *i.e.*, they will spend the summer and the winter with them. When this was fulfilled, it is, perhaps, not possible to tell, as we are so little acquainted with the circumstances of the people in relation to whom it was spoken. If it related, as I suppose, to the people of Nubia or Ethiopia forming an alliance with the Assyrians for the purpose of invading Judea, it was fulfilled probably when Sennacherib and his assembled hosts were destroyed. Whenever it was fulfilled, it is quite evident that the design of the prophecy was to give comfort to the Jews, alarmed and agitated as they were at the prospect of the preparations which were made, by the assurance that those plans would fail, and all the efforts of their enemies be foiled and disconcerted.

7. *In that time.* When their plans shall thus be disconcerted, and their armies be overthrown. ¶ *Shall the present be brought,* &c. The word 'present' ([illegible]) denotes a gift, and is found only in the phrase 'to bring gifts,' or 'presents' (Ps. lxviii. 30; lxxvi. 11). It means here evidently a tribute, or an offering to JEHOVAH as the only true God; and possibly may mean that the people would be converted to him, and embrace the true religion. ¶ *Of a people,* &c. From a people. The description which follows is the same precisely as in ver. 2. Numerous repetitions of this kind will be recollected by the classic reader in the *Iliad.* ¶ *To the place of the name,* &c. The place where JEHOVAH is worshipped, *i.e.*, Jerusalem (comp. Notes, ch. i. 8, 9). We have no means of knowing with certainty when or how this prophecy was fulfilled. That the Jewish religion spread into Upper Egypt, and that the Christian religion was afterwards established there, there can be no doubt. The Jews were scattered into nearly every nation, and probably many of this people became proselytes, and went with them to Jerusalem to worship (see Acts ii. 10; viii. 27). 'The Abyssinian annals represent the country as converted to Judaism several centuries before the Christian era; and it certainly retains many appearances bearing the stamp of that faith. In the fourth century, the nation was converted to Christianity by the efforts of Frumentius, an Egyptian, who raised himself to high favour at court. Abyssinia remained impenetrable to the arms or the creed of the followers of Mahomet, and, affording shelter to the refugees from Egypt and Arabia, it became more decidedly Christian.'—'The Abyssinians profess the same form of Christianity with the Copts of Egypt, and even own the supremacy of the Patriarch at Cairo. They combine with their Christian profession many Judaical observances, such as circumcision, abstinence from meats,

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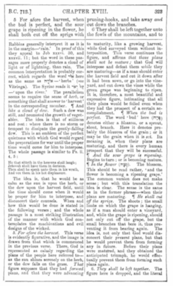

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5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away *and* cut down the branches.

6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to

Rabbins generally interpret it as it is in the margin—'rain.' In proof of this they appeal to Job xxxvi. 30, and xxxvii. 11; but the word in these passages more properly denotes a cloud of light or of lightning, than rain. The common interpretation is probably correct, which regards the word אוֹר here as the same as אוֹרֹת—'herbs' (see Vitringa). The Syriac reads it עַל יְאֹר—'upon the river.' The parallelism seems to require the sense of *herb*, or something that shall answer to 'harvest' in the corresponding member. ¶ *And like a cloud of dew.* Such a dew was still, and promoted the growth of vegetables. The idea is that of stillness and rest: where there is no storm or tempest to dissipate the gently-falling dew. This is an emblem of the perfect quietness with which God would regard the preparations for war until the proper time would come for him to interpose. The whole passage is similar to Ps. ii. 4, 5:

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;
Jehovah shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his hot displeasure.

The idea is, that he would be as calm as the sun is upon the herb, or the dew upon the harvest field, until the time should come when it would be proper for him to interpose, and disconcert their counsels. When and how this would be done is stated in the following verses; and the whole passage is a most striking illustration of the manner with which God contemplates the machinations and evil designs of the wicked.

5. *For afore the harvest.* This verse is evidently figurative, and the image is drawn from that which is commenced in the previous verse. There, God is represented as calmly regarding the plans of the people here referred to—as the sun shines serenely on the herb, or the dew falls on the grass. *That* figure supposes that they had *formed* plans, and that they were advancing to maturity, like a growing harvest, while God surveyed them without interposition. This verse continues the figure, and affirms *that those plans shall not be mature;* that God will interpose and defeat them *while* they are maturing—as if a man should enter the harvest field and cut it down after it had been sown, or go into the vineyard, and cut down the vines while the green grape was beginning to ripen. It is, therefore, a most beautiful and expressive figure, intimating that all their plans would be foiled even when they had the prospect of a certain accomplishment. ¶ *When the bud is perfect.* The word 'bud' here (פֶּרַח) denotes either a *blossom*, or a sprout, shoot, branch. Here it denotes probably the *blossom* of the grain; or it may be the grain when it is *set*. Its meaning is, when their plans are maturing, and there is every human prospect that they will be successful. ¶ *And the sour grape is ripening.* Begins to turn; or is becoming mature. ¶ *In the flower* (נִצָּה). The blossom. This should be read rather, 'and the flower is becoming a ripening grape.' The common version does not make sense; but with this translation the idea is clear. The sense is the same as in the former phrase—when their plans are maturing. ¶ *He shall cut off the sprigs.* The shoots; the small limbs on which the grape is hanging, as if a man should enter a vineyard, and, while the grape is ripening, should not only cut off the grape, but the small branches that bore it, thus preventing it from bearing again. The idea is, not only that God would disconcert their *present* plans, but that he would prevent them from forming any in future. Before their plans were matured, and they obtained the anticipated triumph, he would effectually prevent them from forming such plans again.

6. *They shall be left together.* The figure here is dropped, and the literal

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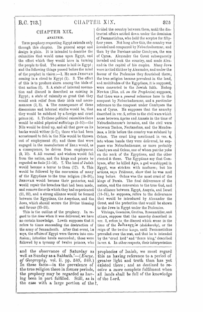

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CHAPTER XIX.

ANALYSIS.

THIS prophecy respecting Egypt extends only through this chapter. Its general scope and design is plain. It is intended to describe the calamities that would come upon Egypt, and the effect which they would have in turning the people to God. The scene is laid in Egypt; and the following things passed before the mind of the prophet in vision:—1. He sees JEHOVAH coming in a cloud to Egypt (1). 2. The effect of this is to produce alarm among the idols of that nation (1). 3. A state of internal commotion and discord is described as existing in Egypt; a state of calamity so great that they would seek relief from their idols and necromancers (2, 3). 4. The consequence of these dissensions and internal strifes would be, that they would be subdued by a foreign and cruel prince (4). 5. To these political calamities there would be added *physical* sufferings (5–10)—the Nile would be dried up, and all that grew on its banks would wither (5–7); those who had been accustomed to fish in the Nile would be thrown out of employment (8); and those that were engaged in the manufacture of linen would, as a consequence, be driven from employment (9, 10). 6. All counsel and wisdom would fail from the nation, and the kings and priests be regarded as fools (11–16). 7. The land of Judah would become a terror to them (17). 8. This would be followed by the conversion of many of the Egyptians to the true religion (18–20); JEHOVAH would become their protector, and would repair the breaches that had been made, and remove the evils which they had experienced (21, 22), and a strong alliance would be formed between the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Jews, which should secure the Divine blessing and favour (23–25).

This is the outline of the prophecy. In regard to the *time* when it was delivered, we have no certain knowledge. Lowth supposes that it refers to times succeeding the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. After that event, he says, the affairs of Egypt were thrown into confusion; intestine broils succeeded; these were followed by a tyranny of twelve princes, who divided the country between them, until the distracted affairs settled down under the dominion of Psammetichus, who held the sceptre for fifty-four years. Not long after this, the country was invaded and conquered by Nebuchadnezzar; and then by the Persians under Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. Alexander the Great subsequently invaded and took the country, and made Alexandria the capital of his empire. Many Jews were invited thither by Alexander, and under the favour of the Ptolemies they flourished there; the true religion became prevalent in the land, and multitudes of the Egyptians, it is supposed, were converted to the Jewish faith. Bishop Newton (*Diss.* xii. *on the Prophecies*) supposes, that there was a *general reference* here to the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar, and a *particular* reference to the conquest under Cambyses the son of Cyrus. He supposes that the anarchy described in ver. 2, refers to the civil wars which arose between Apries and Amasis in the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, and the civil wars between Tachos, Nectanebus, and the Mendesians, a little before the country was subdued by Ochus. The cruel king mentioned in ver. 4, into whose hands they were delivered, he supposes was Nebuchadnezzar, or more probably Cambyses and Ochus, one of whom put the yoke on the neck of the Egyptians, and the other riveted it there. The Egyptians say that Cambyses, after he killed Apis, a god worshipped in Egypt, was stricken with madness; but his actions, says Prideaux, show that he was mad long before. Ochus was the most cruel of the kings of Persia. The final deliverance of the nation, and the conversion to the true God, and the alliance between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel (18–25), he supposes, refers to the deliverance that would be introduced by Alexander the Great, and the protection that would be shown to the Jews in Egypt under the Ptolemies.

Vitringa, Gesenius, Grotius, Rosenmüller, and others, suppose that the anarchy described in ver. 2, refers to the discord which arose in the time of the δωδεκαρχία (*dodekarchy*), or the reign of the twelve kings, until Psammetichus prevailed over the rest, and that he is intended by the 'cruel lord' and 'fierce king,' described in ver. 4. In other respects, their interpretation

and the observance of Saturday as well as Sunday as a Sabbath.'—(*Encyc. of Geography*, vol. ii. pp. 585, 588.) In these facts—in the prevalence of the true religion there in former periods, the prophecy may be regarded as having been in part fulfilled. Still, as is the case with a large portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, we must regard this as having reference to a period of greater light and truth than has yet existed there; and as destined to receive a more complete fulfilment when all lands shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

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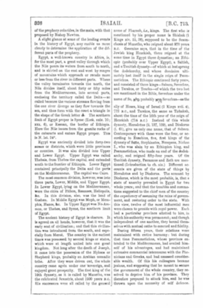

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of the prophecy coincides, in the main, with that proposed by Bishop Newton.

A slight glance at some of the leading events in the history of Egypt, may enable us more clearly to determine the application of the different parts of the prophecy.

Egypt, a well-known country in Africa, is, for the most part, a great valley through which the Nile pours its waters from south to north, and is skirted on the east and west by ranges of mountains which approach or recede more or less from the river in different parts. Where the valley terminates towards the north, the Nile divides itself, about forty or fifty miles from the Mediterranean, into several parts, enclosing the territory called the Delta—so called because the various streams flowing from the one river diverge as they flow towards the sea, and thus form with the coast a triangle in the shape of the Greek letter Δ. The southern limit of Egypt proper is Syene (Ezek. xxix. 10; xxx. 6), or Essuan, the border of Ethiopia. Here the Nile issues from the granite rocks of the cataracts and enters Egypt proper. This is N. lat. 24°.

Egypt was anciently divided into forty-two *nomes* or districts, which were little provinces or counties. It was also divided into Upper and Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt was called Thebais, from Thebes the capital, and extended south to the frontier of Ethiopia. Lower Egypt contained principally the Delta and the parts on the Mediterranean. The capital was Cairo.

The most common division, however, was into three parts, Lower, Middle, and Upper Egypt. In Lower Egypt, lying on the Mediterranean, were the cities of Pithon, Raamses, Heliopolis, &c. In this division, also, was the land of Goshen. In Middle Egypt was Moph, or Memphis, Hanes, &c. In Upper Egypt was No-Ammon, or Thebes, and Syene, the southern limit of Egypt.

The ancient history of Egypt is obscure. It is agreed on all hands, however, that it was the early seat of civilisation; and that this civilisation was introduced from the south, and especially from Meroë. The country in the earliest times was possessed by several kings or states, which were at length united into one great kingdom. Not long after the death of Joseph, it came into the possession of the Hyksos or Shepherd kings, probably an Arabian nomadic tribe. After they were driven out, the whole country came again under one sovereign, and enjoyed great prosperity. The first king of the 19th dynasty, as it is called by Manetho, was the celebrated Sesostris, about 1500 years B.C. His successors were all called by the general name of Pharaoh, *i.e.*, kings. The first who is mentioned by his proper name is Shishak (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26), supposed to be the Sesonchosis of Manetho, who reigned about 970 years B.C. Gesenius says, that in the time of the Jewish king Hezekiah, there reigned at the same time in Egypt three dynasties; an Ethiopic (probably over Upper Egypt), a Saitish, and a Tanitish dynasty—of which at last sprung the dodekarchy, and whose dominion ultimately lost itself in the single reign of Psammetichus. The Ethiopic continued forty years, and consisted of three kings—Sabaco, Sevechus, and Tarakus, or Tearko—of which the two last are mentioned in the Bible, Sevechus under the name of So, סוֹא probably סֶוֶא Sevechus—as the ally of Hosea, king of Israel (2 Kings xvii. 4), 722 B.C., and Tarakus, the same as Tirhakah, about the time of the 14th year of the reign of Hezekiah (714 B.C.) Instead of this whole dynasty, Herodotus (ii. 137, 139), and Diodorus (i. 65), give us only one name, that of Sabaco. Contemporary with these were the four, or according to Eusebius, five, first kings of the dynasty of Saïte, Stephinates, Nerepsos, Nichao I., who was slain by an Ethiopian king, and Psammetichus, who made an end of the dodekarchy, and reigned fifty-four years. Of the Tanitish dynasty, Psammus and Zeth are mentioned (Introduction to ch. xix.) Different accounts are given of the state of things by Herodotus and by Diodorus. The account by Diodorus, which is the most probable, is, that a state of anarchy prevailed in Egypt for two whole years; and that the troubles and commotions suggested to the chief men of the country the expediency of *assuming the reins of government*, and restoring order to the state. With this view, twelve of the most influential men were chosen to preside with regal power. Each had a particular province allotted to him, in which his authority was permanent; and though independent of one another, they bound themselves with mutual oaths to concord and fidelity.

During fifteen years, their relations were maintained with entire harmony: but during that time Psammetichus, whose province extended to the Mediterranean, had availed himself of his advantages, and had maintained extensive commercial intercourse with the Phenicians and Greeks, and had amassed considerable wealth. Of this his colleagues became jealous, and supposing that he meant to secure the government of the whole country, they resolved to deprive him of his province. They therefore prepared to attack him, and he was thrown upon the necessity of self defence.

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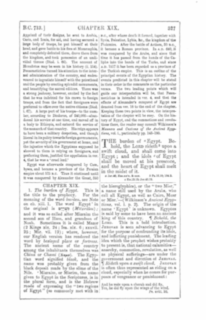

Apprised of their designs, he sent to Arabia, Caria, and Ionia, for aid, and having secured a large body of troops, he put himself at their head, and gave battle to his foes at Momemphis, and completely defeated them, drove them from the kingdom, and took possession of an undivided throne (Diod. i. 66). The account of Herodotus may be seen in his history (ii. 154). Psammetichus turned his attention to the internal administration of the country, and endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the priesthood and the people by erecting splendid monuments, and beautifying the sacred edifices. There was a strong jealousy, however, excited by the fact that he was indebted for his crown to foreign troops, and from the fact that foreigners were preferred to office over the native citizens (Diod. i. 67). A large part of his troops—to the number, according to Diodorus, of 240,000—abandoned his service at one time, and moved off in a body to Ethiopia, and entered the service of the monarch of that country. His reign appears to have been a military despotism, and though liberal in its policy towards foreign governments, yet the severity of his government at home, and the injustice which the Egyptians supposed he showed to them in relying on foreigners, and preferring them, justified the appellation in ver. 4, that he was a '*cruel lord*.'

Egypt was afterwards conquered by Cambyses, and became a province of the Persian empire about 525 B.C. Thus it continued until it was conquered by Alexander the Great, 350 B.C., after whose death it formed, together with Syria, Palestine, Lybia, &c., the kingdom of the Ptolemies. After the battle of Actium, 30 B.C., it became a Roman province. In A.D. 640, it was conquered by the Arabs, and since that time it has passed from the hands of the Caliphs into the hands of the Turks, and since A.D. 1517 it has been regarded as a province of the Turkish empire. This is an outline of the principal events of the Egyptian history. The events predicted in this chapter will be stated in their order in the comments on the particular verses. The two leading points which will guide our interpretation will be, that Psammetichus is intended in ver. 4, and that the effects of Alexander's conquest of Egypt are denoted from ver. 18 to the end of the chapter. Keeping these two points in view, the interpretation of the chapter will be easy. On the history of Egypt, and the commotions and revolutions there, the reader may consult Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i., particularly pp. 143–180.

THE burden of [a] Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth [b] upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt; and the idols [c] of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

a Jer.46; Eze.xxix. & xxx. b Ps.18.10; 104.3. c Ex.12.12; Jer.43.12.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. *The burden of Egypt.* This is the title to the prophecy. For the meaning of the word *burden*, see Note on ch. xiii. 1. The word 'Egypt' in the original is מִצְרַיִם (*Mitzraim*); and it was so called after Mizraim the second son of Ham, and grandson of Noah. Sometimes it is called Mazor (2 Kings xix. 24; Isa. xix. 6; xxxvii. 25; Mic. vii. 12); where, however, our English version has rendered the word by *besieged place* or *fortress*. The ancient name of the country among the inhabitants themselves was *Chims* or *Chami* (Χημι). The Egyptian word signified *black*, and the name was probably given from the black deposit made by the slime of the Nile. 'Mizraim, or Misrim, the name given to Egypt in the Scriptures, is in the plural form, and is the Hebrew mode of expressing the "two regions of Egypt" (so commonly met with in the hieroglyphics), or the "two Misr," a name still used by the Arabs, who call all Egypt, as well as Cairo, Musr or Misr.'—(Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 2). The origin of the name 'Egypt' is unknown. Egyptus is said by some to have been an ancient king of this country. ¶ *Behold, the* LORD. This is a bold introduction. JEHOVAH is seen advancing to Egypt for the purpose of confounding its idols, and inflicting punishment. The leading idea which the prophet wishes probably to present is, that national calamities—anarchy, commotion, revolution, as well as physical sufferings—are under the government and direction of JEHOVAH. ¶ *Rideth upon a swift cloud.* JEHOVAH is often thus represented as riding on a cloud, especially when he comes for purposes of vengeance or punishment:

And he rode upon a cherub and did fly,
Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
Ps. xviii. 10.

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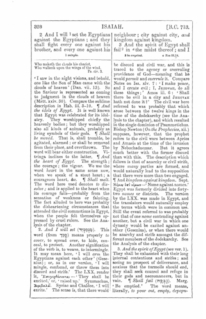

2 And I will [1] set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom.

3 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail [2] in [a] the midst thereof; and I

1 mingle. 2 be emptied. a Eze.32.14.

Who maketh the clouds his chariot,
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind.
Ps. civ. 3.

'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven' (Dan. vii. 13). So the Saviour is represented as coming to judgment in the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30). Compare the sublime description in Hab. iii. 3–10. ¶ *And the idols of Egypt.* It is well known that Egypt was celebrated for its idolatry. They worshipped chiefly the heavenly bodies; but they worshipped also all kinds of animals, probably as living symbols of their gods. ¶ *Shall be moved.* That is, shall tremble, be agitated, alarmed; or shall be removed from their place, and overthrown. The word will bear either construction. Vitringa inclines to the latter. ¶ *And the heart of Egypt.* The strength; the courage; the vigour. We use the word *heart* in the same sense now, when we speak of a stout heart; a courageous heart, &c. ¶ *Shall melt.* The word here used denotes *to dissolve*; and is applied to the heart when its courage fails—probably from the sensation of weakness or fainting. The fact alluded to here was probably the disheartening circumstances that attended the civil commotions in Egypt, when the people felt themselves oppressed by cruel rulers. See the Analysis of the chapter.

2. *And I will set* (סִכְסַכְתִּי). This word (from סָכַךְ) means properly *to cover*, to spread over, to hide, conceal, to protect. Another signification of the verb is, to weave, to intermingle. It may mean here, 'I will *arm* the Egyptians against each other' (Gesenius); or, as in our version, 'I will mingle, confound, or throw them into discord and strife.' The LXX. render it, Ἐπεγερθήσονται—'They shall be excited,' or, 'raised up.' Symmachus, συμβαλῶ. Syriac and Chaldee, 'I will excite.' The sense is, that there would be discord and civil war, and this is traced to the agency or overruling providence of God—meaning that he would *permit* and *overrule* it. Compare Notes on Isa. xlv. 7: 'I make peace, and I create evil; I, JEHOVAH, do all these things;' Amos iii. 6: 'Shall there be evil in a city and JEHOVAH hath not done it?' The civil war here referred to was probably that which arose between the twelve kings in the time of the dodekarchy (see the Analysis to the chapter), and which resulted in the single dominion of Psammetichus. Bishop Newton (*On the Prophecies*, xii.) supposes, however, that the prophet refers to the civil wars between Apries and Amasis at the time of the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. But it agrees much better with the former discord than with this. The description which follows is that of anarchy or civil strife, where *many* parties are formed, and would naturally lead to the supposition that there were more than two engaged. ¶ And *kingdom against kingdom.* Sept. Νομὸς ἐπὶ νομὸν—'Nome against nomes.' Egypt was formerly divided into forty-two *nomes* or districts. The version by the LXX. was made in Egypt, and the translators would naturally employ the terms which were in common use. Still the event referred to was probably not that *of one nome* contending against another, but a civil war in which one dynasty would be excited against another (Gesenius), or when there would be anarchy and strife amongst the different members of the dodekarchy. See the Analysis of the chapter.

3. *And the spirit of Egypt* (see ver. 1). They shall be exhausted with their long internal contentions and strifes; and seeing no prospect of deliverance, and anxious that the turmoils should end, they shall seek counsel and refuge in their gods and necromancers, but in vain. ¶ *Shall fail* (וְנָבְקָה). Marg. 'Be emptied.' The word means, literally, *to pour out, empty, depopu-*

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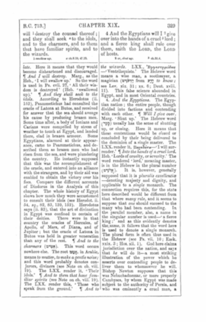

will [1] destroy the counsel thereof; and they shall seek [a] to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

4 And the Egyptians will I [2] give over into the hands of a cruel [b] lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts.

1 swallow up. a ch.8.19; 47.12. 2 or, shut up. b ch.20.4.

late. Here it means that they would become disheartened and discouraged. ¶ *And I will destroy.* Marg., as the Heb., 'I will swallow up.' So the word is used in Ps. cvii. 27, 'All their wisdom is destroyed' (Heb. 'swallowed up).' ¶ *And they shall seek to the idols.* According to Herodotus (ii. 152), Psammetichus had consulted the oracle of Latona at Butos, and received for answer that the sea should avenge his cause by producing brazen men. Some time after, a body of Ionians and Carians were compelled by stress of weather to touch at Egypt, and landed there, clad in brazen armour. Some Egyptians, alarmed at their appearance, came to Psammetichus, and described them as brazen men who had risen from the sea, and were plundering the country. He instantly supposed that this was the accomplishment of the oracle, and entered into an alliance with the strangers, and by their aid was enabled to obtain the victory over his foes. Compare the different accounts of Diodorus in the Analysis of this chapter. The whole history of Egypt shows how much they were accustomed to consult their idols (see Herodot. ii. 54, *sq.*, 82, 83, 139, 152). Herodotus says (ii. 83), that the art of divination in Egypt was confined to certain of their deities. There were in that country the oracles of Hercules, of Apollo, of Mars, of Diana, and of Jupiter; but the oracle of Latona in Butos was held in greater veneration than any of the rest. ¶ *And to the charmers* (אִטִּים). This word occurs nowhere else. The root אטט, in Arabic, means *to mutter*, *to make a gentle noise*; and this word probably denotes conjurors, diviners (see Note on ch. viii. 19). The LXX. render it, 'Their idols.' ¶ *And to them that have familiar spirits* (see Note on ch. viii. 19). The LXX. render this, 'Those who speak from the ground.' ¶ *And to the wizards.* LXX., Ἐγγαστριμύθους—'Ventriloquists.' The Hebrew word means a wise man, a soothsayer, a magician (יִדְּעֹנִים from יָדַע *to know*; see Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6; Deut. xviii. 11). This false science abounded in Egypt, and in most Oriental countries.

4. *And the Egyptians.* The Egyptian nation; the entire people, though divided into factions and contending with each other. ¶ *Will I give over.* Marg. 'Shut up.' The Hebrew word (סִכַּר) usually has the sense of shutting up, or closing. Here it means that these contentions would be *closed* or concluded by their being delivered to the dominion of a single master. The LXX. render it, Παραδώσω—'I will surrender.' ¶ *Into the hands of a cruel lord.* Heb. 'Lords of cruelty, or severity.' The word rendered 'lord,' meaning master, is in the Hebrew in the plural number (אֲדֹנִים). It is, however, generally supposed that it is *pluralis excellentiæ*—denoting majesty and dignity, and applicable to a *single* monarch. The connection requires this, for the state here described would be different from that where many rule, and it seems to suppose that *one* should succeed to the many who had been contending. In the parallel member, also, a name in the singular number is used—'a fierce king;' and as this evidently denotes the same, it follows that the word here is used to denote a single monarch. The plural form is often thus used in the Hebrew (see Ps. vii. 10; Ezek. xxix. 3; Hos. xii. 1). God here claims jurisdiction over the nation, and says that *he* will do it—a most striking illustration of the power which he asserts over contending people to deliver them to whomsoever he will. Bishop Newton supposes that this was Nebuchadnezzar, or more properly Cambyses, by whom Egypt was made subject to the authority of Persia, and who was eminently a cruel man, a

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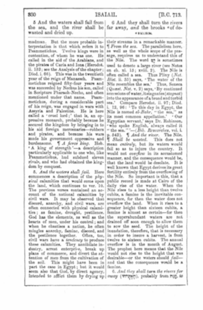

330 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

5 And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

6 And they shall turn the rivers far away, *and* the brooks [a] of de-

a 2 Ki.19.24.

madman. But the more probable interpretation is that which refers it to Psammetichus. Twelve kings were in contention, of whom he was one. He called in the aid of the Arabians, and the pirates of Caria and Iona (Herodot. ii. 152; see the Analysis of the chapter; Diod. i. 66). This was in the twentieth year of the reign of Manasseh. Psammetichus reigned fifty-four years and was succeeded by Nechus his son, called in Scripture Pharaoh-Necho, and often mentioned under that name. Psammetichus, during a considerable part of his reign, was engaged in wars with Assyria and Palestine. He is here called a 'cruel lord;' that is, an oppressive monarch, probably because he secured the kingdom by bringing in to his aid foreign mercenaries—robbers and pirates, and because his wars made his government oppressive and burdensome. ¶ *A fierce king.* Heb. 'A king of strength'—a description particularly applicable to one who, like Psammetichus, had subdued eleven rivals, and who had obtained the kingdom by conquest.

5. *And the waters shall fail.* Here commences a description of the *physical* calamities that would come upon the land, which continues to ver. 10. The previous verses contained an account of the national calamities by civil wars. It may be observed that discord, anarchy, and civil wars, are often connected with physical calamities; as famine, drought, pestilence. God has the elements, as well as the hearts of men, under his control; and when he chastises a nation, he often mingles anarchy, famine, discord, and the pestilence together. Often, too, civil wars have a *tendency* to produce these calamities. They annihilate industry, arrest enterprise, break up plans of commerce, and divert the attention of men from the cultivation of the soil. This might have been in part the case in Egypt; but it would seem also that God, by direct agency, intended to afflict them by drying up their streams in a remarkable manner. ¶ *From the sea.* The parallelism here, as well as the whole scope of the passage, requires us to understand this of the Nile. The word יָם is sometimes used to denote a large river (see Notes on ch. xi. 15; xviii. 2). The Nile is often called a sea. Thus Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* ii. 35) says, 'The water of the Nile resembles the sea.' Thus, Seneca (*Quæst. Nat.* v. 2) says, 'By continued accessions of water, it stagnates (*stagnat*) into the appearance of a broad and turbid sea.' Compare Herodot. ii. 97; Diod. i. 12, 96: 'To this day in Egypt, the Nile is named *el-Bahr*, "the sea," as its most common appellation.' 'Our Egyptian servant,' says Dr. Robinson, 'who spoke English, always called it "the sea."'—(*Bib. Researches*, vol. i. p. 542). ¶ *And the river.* The Nile. ¶ *Shall be wasted.* This does not mean *entirely*, but its waters would fail so as to injure the country. It would not *overflow* in its accustomed manner, and the consequence would be, that the land would be desolate. It is well known that Egypt derives its great fertility entirely from the overflowing of the Nile. So important is this, that a public record is made at Cairo of the daily rise of the water. When the Nile rises to a less height than twelve cubits, a famine is the inevitable consequence, for then the water does not overflow the land. When it rises to a greater height than sixteen cubits, a famine is almost as certain—for then the superabundant waters are not drained off soon enough to allow them to sow the seed. The height of the inundation, therefore, that is necessary in order to insure a harvest, is from twelve to sixteen cubits. The annual overflow is in the month of August. The prophet here means that the Nile would not rise to the height that was desirable—or the waters should *fail*—and that the consequence would be a famine.

6. *And they shall turn the rivers far away* (הֶאֶזְנִיחוּ), probably from זָנַח, to

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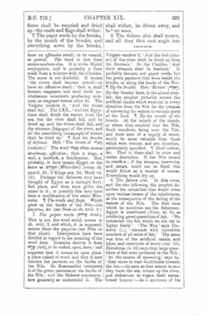

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIX. 331

fence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

7 The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be[1] no *more*.

8 The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into

1 shall not be.

have an offensive smell; to be rancid, or putrid. The word in this form occurs nowhere else. It is in the Hiphil conjugation, and is probably a form made from a mixture with the Chaldee. The sense is not doubtful. It means 'the rivers shall become putrid—or have an offensive smell;' that is, shall become stagnant, and send forth unwholesome *miasmata* producing sickness, as stagnant waters often do. The Vulgate renders it, 'And the rivers shall fail.' The LXX., 'And the Egyptians shall drink the waters from the sea, but the river shall fail, and be dried up, and the rivers shall fail, and the streams (διώρυχες) of the river, and all the assembling (συναγωγὴ) of waters shall be dried up.' ¶ And *the brooks of defence.* Heb. 'The rivers of מָצוֹר (*mâtzôr*).' The word מָצוֹר often means *straitness, affliction;* then a siege, a wall, a bulwark, a fortification. But, probably, it here means *Egypt*, or the same as מִצְרַיִם (*Mitzraim*) (comp. ch. xxxvii. 25; 2 Kings xxx. 24; Mark vii. 12). Perhaps the Hebrews may have thought of Egypt as a strongly fortified place, and thus have given the name to it; or possibly this may have been a modification of the name *Mitzraim.* ¶ *The reeds and flags.* Which grew on the banks of the Nile—the papyrus, &c. (see Note on ch. xviii. 2.)

7. *The paper reeds* (עָרוֹת *âroth*). This is not the word which occurs in ch. xviii. 2, and which, it is supposed, means there the papyrus (see Note on that place). Interpreters have been divided in regard to the meaning of the word here. Gesenius derives it from עָרָה (*ârâ*), *to be naked, open, bare;* and supposes that it means an open place, a place naked of wood, and that it here denotes the pastures on the banks of the Nile. So Rosenmüller interprets it of the green pastures on the banks of the Nile; and the Hebrew commentators generally so understand it. The Vulgate renders it, 'And the bed (*alveus*) of the river shall be dried up from the fountain.' So the Chaldee, 'And their streams shall be desolate.' It probably denotes, not paper reeds, but the green pastures that were beside the brooks, or along the banks of the Nile. ¶ *By the brooks.* Heb. 'Rivers' (יְאֹרֵי). By the 'brooks' here, in the plural number, the prophet probably means the artificial canals which were cut in every direction from the Nile for the purpose of conveying the waters to various parts of the land. ¶ *By the mouth of the brooks.* At the mouth of the canals, or where they emptied into the Nile. Such meadows, being *near* the Nile, and most sure of a supply of water, would be more valuable than those which were remote, and are, therefore, particularly specified. ¶ *Shall wither, &c.* That is, there shall be utter and entire desolation. If the Nile ceased to overflow; if the streams, reservoirs, and canals, could not be filled, this would follow as a matter of course. Everything would dry up.

8. *The fishers also.* In this verse, and the two following, the prophet describes the calamities that would come upon various classes of the inhabitants, as the consequence of the failing of the waters of the Nile. The first class which he mentions are the fishermen. Egypt is mentioned (Num. xi. 5), as producing great quantities of fish. 'We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely.' 'The Nile,' says Diodorus (i.), 'abounds with incredible numbers of all sorts of fish.' The same was true of the artificial canals, and lakes, and reservoirs of water (ver. 10). Herodotus (ii. 93) says that large quantities of fish were produced in the Nile: 'At the season of spawning,' says he, 'they move in vast multitudes towards the sea.—As soon as that season is over they leave the sea, return up the river, and endeavour to regain their accustomed haunts.'—As a specimen of his

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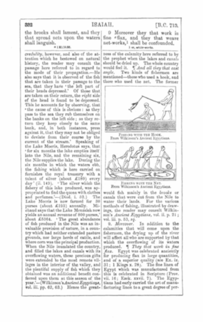

332 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

9 Moreover they that work in fine [a] flax, and they that weave net-works,[1] shall be confounded.

a 1 Ki.10.28.

1 or, white-works.

credulity, however, and also of the attention which he bestowed on natural history, the reader may consult the passage here referred to in regard to the mode of their propagation.—He also says that it is observed of the fish that are taken in their passage to the sea, that they have 'the left part of their heads depressed.' Of those that are taken on their return, the *right* side of the head is found to be depressed. This he accounts for by observing, that 'the cause of this is obvious: as they pass to the sea they rub themselves on the banks on the left side; as they return they keep closely to the same bank, and, in both instances, press against it, that they may not be obliged to deviate from their course by the current of the stream.' Speaking of the Lake Moeris, Herodotus says, that 'for six months the lake empties itself into the Nile, and the remaining six, the Nile supplies the lake. During the six months in which the waters ebb, the fishing which is here carried on furnishes the royal treasury with a talent of silver (about £180) every day' (ii. 149). 'The silver which the fishery of this lake produced, was appropriated to find the queen with clothes and perfumes.'—(Diod. i. 52.) The Lake Moeris is now farmed for 30 purses (about £193) annually. Michaud says that the Lake Menzaleh now yields an annual revenue of 800 purses,' about £5364. 'The great abundance of fish produced in the Nile was an invaluable provision of nature, in a country which had neither extended pasture grounds, nor large herds of cattle, and where corn was the principal production. When the Nile inundated the country, and filled the lakes and canals with its overflowing waters, these precious gifts were extended to the most remote villages in the interior of the valley, and the plentiful supply of fish which they obtained was an additional benefit conferred upon them at this season of the year.'—(Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii. pp. 62, 63.) Hence the greatness of the calamity here referred to by the prophet when the lakes and canals should be dried up. The whole country would feel it. ¶ *And all they that cast angle.* Two kinds of fishermen are mentioned—those who used a hook, and those who used the net. The former would fish mainly in the *brooks* or canals that were cut from the Nile to water their lands. For the various methods of fishing, illustrated by drawings, the reader may consult Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii. p. 21; vol. iii. p. 53, *sq.*

FISHING WITH THE HOOK.
From Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians.

FISHING WITH THE NET.
From Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians.

9. *Moreover.* In addition to the calamities that will come upon the fishermen, the drying up of the river will affect all who are supported by that which the overflowing of its waters produced. ¶ *They that work in fine flax.* Egypt was celebrated anciently for producing flax in large quantities, and of a superior quality (see Ex. ix. 31; 1 Kings x. 28). The fine linen of Egypt which was manufactured from this is celebrated in Scripture (Prov. vii. 16; Ezek. xxvii. 7). The Egyptians had early carried the art of manufacturing linen to a great degree of per-

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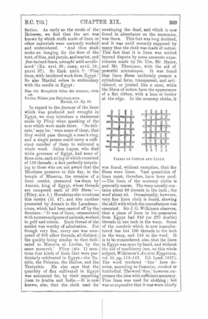

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIX. 333

fection. As early as the exode of the Hebrews, we find that the art was known by which stuffs made of linen or other materials were curiously worked and embroidered. 'And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and *fine-twined linen, wrought with needle-work*' (Ex. xxvi. 36; comp. xxvii. 16; xxxvi. 37). So Ezek. xxvii. 7: 'Fine linen, with broidered work from Egypt.' So also Martial refers to embroidery with the needle in Egypt:

Hæc tibi Memphitis tellus dat munera; victa est
Pectine Niliaco jam Babylonis acus.
Martial, xiv. Ep. 50.

In regard to the *fineness* of the linen which was produced and wrought in Egypt, we may introduce a statement made by Pliny when speaking of the *nets* which were made there. 'So delicate,' says he, 'were some of them, that they would pass through a man's ring, and a single person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood. Julius Lupus, who died while governor of Egypt, had some of those nets, each string of which consisted of 150 threads; a fact perfectly surprising to those who are not aware that the Rhodians preserve to this day, in the temple of Minerva, the remains of a linen corslet, presented to them by Amasis, king of Egypt, whose threads are composed each of 365 fibres.'—(Pliny, xix. 1.) Herodotus also mentions this corslet (iii. 47), and also another presented by Amasis to the Lacedemonians, which had been carried off by the Samians: 'It was of linen, ornamented with numerous figures of animals, worked in gold and cotton. Each thread of the corslet was worthy of admiration. For though very fine, every one was composed of 360 other threads, all distinct; the quality being similar to that dedicated to Minerva at Lindus, by the same monarch.' Pliny (xix. 1) mentions four kinds of linen that were particularly celebrated in Egypt—the Tanitic, the Pelusiac, the Butine, and the Tentyritic. He also says that the quantity of flax cultivated in Egypt was accounted for, by their exporting linen to Arabia and India.—It is now known, also, that the cloth used for enveloping the dead, and which is now found in abundance on the mummies, was *linen*. This fact was long doubted, and it was until recently supposed by many that the cloth was made of cotton. This fact that it is linen was settled beyond dispute by some accurate experiments made by Dr. Ure, Mr. Bauer, and Mr. Thompson, with the aid of powerful microscopes. It was found that linen fibres uniformly present a cylindrical form, transparent, and articulated, or jointed like a cane, while the fibres of cotton have the appearance of a flat ribbon, with a hem or border at the edge. In the mummy cloths, it

Fibres of Cotton and Linen.

was found, without exception, that the fibres were linen. Vast quantities of linen must, therefore, have been used. —The linen of the mummy cloths is generally coarse. The warp usually contains about 90 threads in the inch; the woof about 44. Occasionally, however, very fine linen cloth is found, showing the skill with which the manufacture was executed. Sir J. G. Wilkinson observes, that a piece of linen in his possession from Egypt had 540 (or 270 double) threads in one inch in the warp. Some of the cambric which is now manufactured has but 160 threads in the inch in the warp, and 140 in the woof. It is to be remembered, also, that the linen in Egypt was spun by hand, and without the aid of machinery (see, on this whole subject, Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii. pp. 113-142. Ed. Lond. 1837). The word rendered 'fine' here denotes, according to Gesenius, *combed* or *hatchelled*. The word 'fine,' however, expresses the idea with sufficient accuracy. Fine linen was used for clothing; but was so expensive that it was worn chiefly

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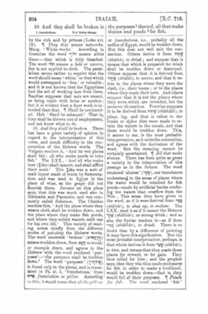

334 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

10 And they shall be broken in the purposes[1] thereof, all that make sluices *and* ponds[2] for fish.

1 foundations. 2 of living things.

by the rich and by princes (Luke xvi. 19). ¶ *They that weave networks.* Marg. 'White-works.' According to Gesenius the word חוֹרָי means *white linen*—that which is fully bleached. The word חוֹר means *a hole* or *cavern*, but is not applied to cloth. The parallelism seems rather to require that the word should mean 'white,' or that which would correspond to 'fine,' or valuable; and it is not known that the Egyptians had the art of working lace from linen. Sandius supposes that *nets* are meant, as being made with holes or meshes; but it is evident that a finer work is intended than that. ¶ *Shall be confounded.* Heb. 'Shall be ashamed.' That is, they shall be thrown out of employment, and not know what to do.

10. *And they shall be broken.* There has been a great variety of opinion in regard to the interpretation of this verse, and much difficulty in the construction of the Hebrew words. The Vulgate renders it, 'And its wet places shall fail; all who make ponds to take fish.' The LXX., 'And all who make beer (ζῦθον) shall lament, and shall afflict their souls.' This ζῦθον was a sort of malt liquor made of fruits by fermentation, and was used in Egypt in the place of wine, as the grape did not flourish there. Jerome on this place says, that this was much used also in Dalmatia and Pannonia, and was commonly called *Sabaium*. The Chaldee renders this, 'And the place where they weave cloth shall be trodden down, and the place where they make fish ponds, and where they collect waters, each one for his own life.' This variety of reading arises chiefly from the different modes of *pointing* the Hebrew words. The word rendered 'broken' (מְדֻכָּאִים) means *trodden down*, from דָּכָא *to tread*, or *trample down*, and agrees in the Hebrew with the word rendered 'purposes'—'the purposes shall be trodden down.' The word 'purposes' (שָׁתֹתֶיהָ) is found only in the plural, and is translated in Ps. xi. 3, 'foundations,' from שָׁת, *foundation* or *pillar*. According to this, it would mean that all *the pillars* or *foundations*, *i.e.*, probably all the *nobles* of Egypt, would be trodden down. But this does not well suit the connection. Others derive it from שָׁתָה (*shâthâ*), *to drink*; and suppose that it means that which is prepared for drink shall be trodden down or destroyed. Others suppose that it is derived from שָׁתָה (*shâthâ*), *to weave*, and that it refers to the places where they wove the cloth, *i.e.*, their looms; or to the places where they made their nets. And others suppose that it is not the *places* where they wove which are intended, but the *weavers themselves*. Forerius supposes it to be derived from שָׁתַת (*shâthăth*), *to place, lay*, and that it refers to the *banks* or *dykes* that were made to retain the waters in the canals, and that these would be trodden down. This, it seems to me, is the most probable interpretation, as it suits the connection, and agrees with the derivation of the word. But the meaning cannot be certainly ascertained. ¶ *All that make sluices.* There has been quite as great a variety in the intepretation of this passage as in the former. The word rendered 'sluices' (שֶׂכֶר), our translators understand in the sense of places where the water would be retained for fish ponds—made by artificial banks confining the waters that overflow from the Nile. This sense they have given to the word, as if it were derived from סָכַר (*sâkhăr*), *to shut up, to enclose*. The LXX. read it as if it meant the Hebrew שֵׁכָר (*shêkhâr*), or strong drink; and so also the Syriac renders it—as if from שָׁכַר (*shâkhăr*), *to drink*. There is no doubt that by a difference of pointing it may have this signification. But the most probable interpretation, perhaps, is that which derives it from שָׂכַר (*sâkhăr*), *to hire*, and means that they made those places for reward, or for gain. They thus toiled for hire; and the prophet says, that they who thus made enclosures for fish in order to make a livelihood, would be trodden down—that is, they would fail of their purposes. ¶ *Ponds for fish.* The word rendered 'fish'

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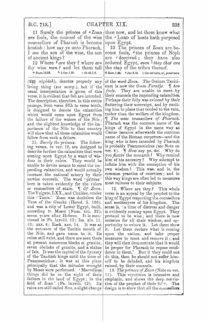

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIX. 335

11 Surely the princes of [a]Zoan *are* fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I *am* the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

12 Where [b]*are* they? where *are* thy wise *men*? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the [c]LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

13 The princes of Zoan are become fools, [d]the princes of Noph are [e]deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, *even* [1]*they that are* the stay of the tribes thereof.

a Num.13.22. b 1 Cor.1.20. c ch.44.7,8. d Rom.1.22. e Jer.2.16. 1 the corners, or, governors.

(נֶפֶשׁ *nĕphĕsh*), denotes properly any living thing (*see marg.*), but if the usual interpretation is given of this verse, it is evident that fish are intended. The description, therefore, in this entire passage, from verse fifth to verse tenth, is designed to denote the calamities which would come upon Egypt from the failure of the waters of the Nile; and the slightest knowledge of the importance of the Nile to that country will show that all these calamities would follow from such a failure.

11. *Surely the princes.* The following verses, to ver. 16, are designed to describe further the calamities that were coming upon Egypt by a want of wisdom in their rulers. They would be unable to devise means to meet the impending calamities, and would actually increase the national misery by their unwise counsels. The word 'princes' here is taken evidently for the rulers or counsellors of state. ¶ *Of Zoan.* The Vulgate, LXX., and Chaldee, render this 'Tanis.' Zoan was doubtless the Tanis of the Greeks (Herod. ii. 166), and was a city of Lower Egypt, built, according to Moses (Num. xiii. 22), seven years after Hebron. It is mentioned in Ps. lxxviii. 12; Isa. xix. 11, 13; xxx. 4; Ezek. xxx. 14. It was at the entrance of the Tanitic mouth of the Nile, and gave name to it. Its ruins still exist, and there are seen there at present numerous blocks of granite, seven obelisks of granite, and a statue of Isis. It was the capital of the dynasty of the Tanitish kings until the time of Psammetichus; it was at this place principally that the miracles wrought by Moses were performed. 'Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt; in the field of Zoan' (Ps. lxxviii. 12). Its ruins are still called *San*, a slight change of the word *Zoan*. The Ostium Taniticum is now the *Oum Faredje*. ¶ *Are fools.* They are unable to meet by their counsels the impending calamities. Perhaps their folly was evinced by their flattering their sovereign, and by exciting him to plans that tended to the ruin, rather than the welfare of the kingdom. ¶ *The wise counsellors of Pharaoh.* Pharaoh was the common name of the kings of Egypt in the same way as *Cæsar* became afterwards the common name of the Roman emperors—and the king who is here intended by Pharaoh is probably Psammetichus (see Note on ver. 4). ¶ *How say ye, &c.* Why do you *flatter* the monarch? Why remind him of his ancestry? Why attempt to inflate him with the conception of his own wisdom? This was, and is, the common practice of courtiers; and in this way kings are often led to measures most ruinous to their subjects.

12. *Where are they?* This whole verse is an appeal by the prophet to the king of Egypt respecting the counsellors and soothsayers of his kingdom. The sense is, 'a time of distress and danger is evidently coming upon Egypt. They pretend to be wise; and there is now occasion for all their wisdom, and opportunity to evince it. Let them show it. Let them declare what is coming upon the nation, and take proper measures to meet and remove it; and they will then demonstrate that it would be proper for Pharaoh to repose confidence in them.' But if they could not do this, then he should not suffer himself to be deluded, and his kingdom ruined, by their counsels.

13. *The princes of Zoan* (Note on ver. 11). This *repetition* is intensive and emphatic, and shows the deep conviction of the prophet of their folly. The design is to show that *all* the counsellors

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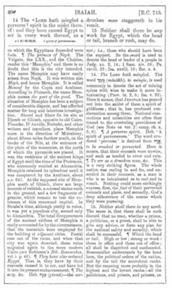

336 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

14 The ᵃLord hath mingled a perverse [1] spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken *man* staggereth in his vomit.

15 Neither shall there be *any* work for Egypt, which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.

a 1 Ki.22.22,23. 1 spirit of perverseness.

on which the Egyptians depended were fools. ¶ *The princes of Noph.* The Vulgate, the LXX., and the Chaldee, render this 'Memphis,' and there is no doubt that this is the city intended. The name Memphis may have easily arisen from Noph. It was written also *Moph*, and hence Memphis. It is called *Menouf* by the Copts and Arabians. According to Plutarch, the name Memphis means *the port of the good.* The situation of Memphis has been a subject of considerable dispute, and has afforded matter for long and laborious investigation. Sicard and Shaw fix its site at Djezeh or Ghizeh, opposite to old Cairo. Pococke, D'Anville, Niebuhr, and other writers and travellers, place Memphis more in the direction of Mitraheny, about fifteen miles further south, on the banks of the Nile, at the entrance of the plain of the mummies, at the north of which the pyramids are placed. It was the residence of the ancient kings of Egypt until the time of the Ptolemies, who commonly resided at Alexandria. Memphis retained its splendour until it was conquered by the Arabians, about A.D. 641. At the supposed site of Memphis south of Ghizeh, there are large mounds of rubbish, a colossal statue sunk in the ground, and a few fragments of granite, which remain to test the existence of this renowned capital. In Strabo's time, although partly in ruins, it was yet a populous city, second only to Alexandria. The total disappearance of the ancient edifices of Memphis is easily accounted for by the circumstance, that the materials were employed for the building of adjacent cities. Fostât rose out of the ruins, and when that city was again deserted, these ruins migrated again to the more modern Cairo (see Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. i. p. 40). ¶ *They have also seduced Egypt.* That is, they have by their counsels caused it to err, and have led it into its present embarrassment. ¶ *The stay, &c.* Heb. פִּנָּה (pĭnnâ)—the corner; *i.e.*, those who should have been the support. So the word is used to denote the head or leader of a people in Judg. xx. 2, 14; 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Zec. x. 4.

14. *The Lord hath mingled.* The word מָסַךְ (mâsăkh), *to mingle*, is used commonly to denote the act of mixing spices with wine to make it more intoxicating (Prov. ix. 2, 5; Isa. v. 22). Here it means, that Jehovah has poured out into the midst of them a spirit of giddiness; that is, has produced consternation among them. National commotions and calamities are often thus traced to the overruling providence of God (see Note on ver. 2; comp. ch. x. 5, 6). ¶ *A perverse spirit.* Heb. 'A spirit of perverseness.' The word rendered 'perverse' is derived from עָוָה, *to be crooked or perverted.* Here it means, that their counsels were unwise, and such as tended to error and ruin. ¶ *To err as a drunken man, &c.* This is a very striking figure. The whole nation was reeling to and fro, and unsettled in their counsels, as a man is who is so intoxicated as to reel and to vomit. Nothing could more strikingly express, first, the *fact* of their perverted counsels and plans, and secondly, God's deep abhorrence of the course which they were pursuing.

15. *Neither shall there be any work.* The sense is, that there shall be such discord that no man, whether a prince, a politician, or a priest, shall be able to give any advice, or form any plan for the national safety and security, which shall be successful. ¶ *Which the head or tail.* High or low; strong or weak: those in office and those out of office; all shall be dispirited and confounded. Rosenmüller understands by the head here, the *political* orders of the nation, and by the tail the *sacerdotal* ranks. But the meaning more probably is, the highest and the lowest ranks—all the politicians, and priests, and princes, on

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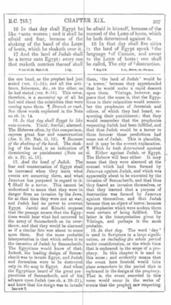

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XIX. 337

16 In that day shall Egypt be like ᶜunto 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.

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.

18 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak [1] the language ᵈof Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, The city of [2] destruction.

c Jer.51.30; Nah.3.13. 1 lip. d Zep.3.9. 2 or, Heres, or, the sun.

the one hand, as the prophet had just stated (ver. 11–15); and all the artificers, fishermen, &c., on the other, as he had stated (ver. 8–10). This verse, therefore, is a *summing up* of all he had said about the calamities that were coming upon them. ¶ *Branch or rush.* See these words explained in the Note on ch. ix. 14.

16. *In that day shall Egypt be like unto women.* Timid; fearful; alarmed. The Hebrews often, by this comparison, express great fear and consternation (Jer. li. 30; Nah. iii. 13). ¶ *Because of the shaking of the hand.* The shaking of the hand is an indication of threatening or punishment (Note on ch. x. 32; xi. 15).

17. *And the land of Judah.* The fear and consternation of Egypt shall be increased when they learn what events are occurring there, and what Jehovah has purposed in regard to it. ¶ *Shall be a terror.* This cannot be understood to mean that they were in danger from an invasion by the Jews, for at that time they were not at war, and Judah had no power to overrun Egypt. Jarchi and Kimchi suppose that the passage means that the Egyptians would hear what had occurred to the army of Sennacherib on its overthrow, and that they would be alarmed as if a similar fate was about to come upon them. But the more probable interpretation is that which refers it to the *invasion* of Judah by Sennacherib. The Egyptians would know of that. Indeed, the leading design of Sennacherib was to invade Egypt, and Judah and Jerusalem were to be destroyed only *in the way* to Egypt. And when the Egyptians heard of the great preparations of Sennacherib, and of his advance upon Judah (see ch. x. 28–31), and knew that his design was to invade them, 'the land of Judah' would be 'a terror,' because they apprehended that he would make a rapid descent upon them. Vitringa, however, supposes that the sense is, that the Egyptians in their calamities would remember the prophecies of Jeremiah and others, of which they had heard, respecting their punishment; that they would remember that the prophecies respecting Judah had been fulfilled, and that thus Judah would be a terror to them *because* those predictions had come out of Judah. This is plausible, and it may be the correct explanation. ¶ *Which he hath determined against it.* Either against Judah, or Egypt. The Hebrew will bear either. It may mean that they were alarmed at the counsel which had been formed by Jehovah against Judah, and which was apparently about to be executed by the invasion of Sennacherib, and that thus they feared an invasion themselves, or that they learned that a purpose of destruction was formed by Jehovah against themselves, and that Judah became thus an object of terror, because the prophecies which were spoken there were certain of being fulfilled. The latter is the interpretation given by Vitringa, and perhaps is the most probable.

18. *In that day.* The word 'day' is used in Scripture in a large signification, *as including the whole period under consideration*, or the whole time that is embraced in the scope of a prophecy. In this chapter it is used in this sense; and evidently means that the event here foretold would take place *somewhere* in the period that is embraced in the design of the prophecy. That is, the event recorded in this verse would occur in the series of events that the prophet saw respecting

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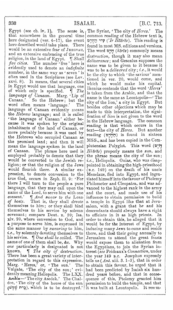

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Egypt (see ch. iv. 1). The sense is, that somewhere in the general time here designated (ver. 4–17), the event here described would take place. There would be an extensive fear of Jehovah, and an extensive embracing of the true religion, in the land of Egypt. ¶ *Shall five cities.* The number 'five' here is evidently used to denote an *indefinite* number, in the same way as 'seven' is often used in the Scriptures (see Lev. xxvi. 8). It means, that several cities in Egypt would use that language, one of which only is specified. ¶ *The language of Canaan.* Marg. 'Lip of Canaan.' So the Hebrew; but the word often means 'language.' The language of Canaan evidently means the *Hebrew* language; and it is called 'the language of Canaan' either because it was spoken by the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan, or more probably because it was used by the Hebrews who occupied Canaan as the promised land; and then it will mean the language spoken in the land of Canaan. The phrase here used is employed probably to denote that they would be converted to the Jewish religion; or that the religion of the Jews would flourish there. A similar expression, to denote conversion to the true God, occurs in Zeph. iii. 9: 'For there I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.' ¶ *And swear to the Lord of hosts.* That is, they shall *devote* themselves to him; or they shall bind themselves to his service by solemn covenant; compare Deut. x. 20; Isa. xlv. 20, where conversion to God, and a purpose to serve him, is expressed in the same manner by *swearing* to him, *i.e.*, by solemnly devoting themselves to his service. ¶ *One shall be called.* The name of one of them shall be, &c. Why *one* particularly is designated is not known. ¶ *The city of destruction.* There has been a great variety of interpretation in regard to this expression. Marg. 'Heres,' or, 'The sun.' The Vulgate, 'The city of the sun;' evidently meaning Heliopolis. The LXX. Ἀσεδὲκ—'The city Asedek.' The Chaldee, 'The city of the house of the sun (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ), which is to be destroyed.' The Syriac, 'The city of *Heres.*' The common reading of the Hebrew text is, עִיר הַהֶרֶס (*'Ir Hăhĕrĕs*). This reading is found in most MS. editions and versions. The word הֶרֶס (*hĕrĕs*) commonly means *destruction*, though it may also mean *deliverance*; and Gesenius supposes the name was to be given to it because it was to be a *delivered* city; *i.e.*, it would be the city to which 'the saviour' mentioned in ver. 20, would come, and which he would make his capital. Ikenius contends that the word '*Heres*' is taken from the Arabic, and that the name is the same as Leontopolis—'The city of the lion,' a city in Egypt. But besides other objections which may be made to this interpretation, the signification of *lion* is not given to the word in the Hebrew language. The common reading is that which occurs in the text—the city of *Heres.* But another reading (הַחֶרֶס) is found in sixteen MSS., and has been copied in the Complutensian Polyglot. This word (חֶרֶס *Hhĕrĕs*) properly means the *sun*, and the phrase means the city of the sun; *i.e.*, Heliopolis. Onias, who was disappointed in obtaining the high-priesthood (B.C. 149) on the death of his uncle Menelaus, fled into Egypt, and ingratiated himself into the favour of Ptolemy Philometer and Cleopatra, and was advanced to the highest rank in the army and the court, and made use of his influence to obtain permission to build a temple in Egypt like that at Jerusalem, with a grant that he and his descendants should always have a right to officiate in it as high priests. In order to obtain this, he alleged that it would be for the interest of Egypt, by inducing many Jews to come and reside there, and that their going annually to Jerusalem to attend the great feasts would expose them to alienation from the Egyptians, to join the Syrian interest (*see* Prideaux's *Connection*, under the year 149 B.C. Josephus expressly tells us (*Ant.* xiii. 3. 1–3), that in order to obtain this favour, he urged that it had been predicted by Isaiah six hundred years before, and that in consequence of this, Ptolemy granted him permission to build the temple, and that it was built at Leontopolis. It rem-

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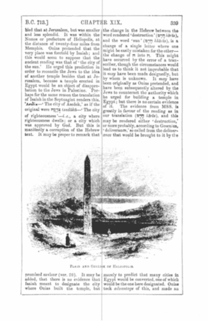

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bled that at Jerusalem, but was smaller and less splendid. It was within the Nomos or prefecture of Heliopolis, at the distance of twenty-four miles from Memphis. Onias pretended that the very place was foretold by Isaiah; and this would seem to suppose that the ancient reading was that of 'the city of the sun.' He urged this prediction in order to reconcile the Jews to the idea of another temple besides that at Jerusalem, because a temple erected in Egypt would be an object of disapprobation to the Jews in Palestine. Perhaps for the same reason the translation of Isaiah in the Septuagint renders this, Ἀσεδέκ—'The city of Asedek,' as if the original were צְדָקָה *tsedâkâ*—'The city of righteousness'—*i.e.*, a city where righteousness dwells; or a city which was approved by God. But this is manifestly a corruption of the Hebrew text. It may be proper to remark that the change in the Hebrew between the word rendered 'destruction' (הֶרֶס *hĕrĕs*), and the word 'sun' (חֶרֶס *hhĕrĕs*), is a change of a single letter where one might be easily mistaken for the other—the change of ה into ח. This might have occurred by the error of a transcriber, though the circumstances would lead us to think it not improbable that it may have been made designedly, but by whom is unknown. It may have been originally as Onias pretended, and have been subsequently altered by the Jews to counteract the authority which he urged for building a temple in Egypt; but there is no certain evidence of it. The evidence from MSS. is greatly in favour of the reading as in our translation (הֶרֶס *hĕrĕs*), and this may be rendered either 'destruction,' or more probably, according to Gesenius, 'deliverance,' so called from the *deliverance* that would be brought to it by the promised saviour (ver. 20). It may be added, that there is no evidence that Isaiah meant to designate the city where Onias built the temple, but merely to predict that many cities in Egypt would be converted, one of which would be the one here designated. Onias took *advantage* of this, and made an

PLAIN AND OBELISK OF HELIOPOLIS.

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340 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

19 In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar [a] at the border thereof to the LORD.

[a] Gen. 28. 18; Ex. 24. 4.

artful use of it, but it was manifestly not the design of Isaiah. Which is the true reading of the passage it is impossible now to determine; nor is it important. I think the most probable interpretation is that which supposes that Isaiah meant to refer to a city saved from destruction, as mentioned in ver. 20, and that he did not design to designate any particular city by name.—The city of Heliopolis was situated on the Pelusian branch of the Nile, about five miles below the point of the ancient Delta. It was deserted in the time of Strabo; and this geographer mentions its mounds of ruin, but the houses were shown in which Eudoxus and Plato had studied. The place was celebrated for its learning, and its temple dedicated to the sun. There are now no ruins of ancient buildings, unless the mounds can be regarded as such; the walls, however, can still be traced, and there is an entire obelisk still standing. This obelisk is of red granite, about seventy feet high, and from its great antiquity has excited much attention among the learned. In the neighbouring villages there are many fragments which have been evidently transferred from this city. Dr. Robinson, who visited it, says, that 'the site is about two hours N.N.E. from Cairo. The way thither passes along the edge of the desert, which is continually making encroachments, so soon as there ceases to be a supply of water for the surface of the ground.—The site of Heliopolis is marked by low mounds, inclosing a space about three quarters of a mile in length, by half a mile in breadth, which was once occupied by houses, and partly by the celebrated temple of the sun. This area is now a ploughed field, a garden of herbs; and the solitary obelisk which rises in the midst is the sole remnant of the splendour of the place.—Near by it is a very old sycamore, its trunk straggling and gnarled, under which legendary tradition relates that the holy family once rested.'—(*Bib. Researches*, vol. i. pp. 36, 37.) The preceding cut, from the Pictorial Bible, will give an idea of the present appearance of Heliopolis.

19. *In that day shall there be an altar.* An *altar* is properly a place on which sacrifices are offered. According to the Mosaic law, but one great altar was to be erected for sacrifices. But the word 'altar' is often used in another sense to denote a place of *memorial*; or a place of worship in general (Josh. xxii. 22–26. It is clear that Isaiah did not intend that this should be taken *literally*, or that there should be a rival temple and altar erected in Egypt, but his description is evidently taken in part from the account of the religion of the patriarchs who erected altars and pillars and monuments to mark the places of the worship of the true God. The parallelism here, where 'pillars' are mentioned, shows in what sense the word 'altar' is used. It means that the worship of the true God would be established in Egypt, and that certain *places* should be set apart to his service. *Altars* were among the first places reared as connected with the worship of God (see Gen. viii. 20; xii. 7; xxxv. 1; Ex. xvii. 15). ¶ *To the* LORD. To JEHOVAH—the true God. ¶ *And a pillar.* That is, a memorial to God. Thus Jacob set up the stone on which he had lain 'for a pillar,' and poured oil on it (Gen. xxviii. 18). Again (Gen. xxxv. 14), he set up a pillar to mark the place where God met him and talked with him (comp. Gen. xxxi. 13; Lev. xxvi. 1; Deut. xvi. 22). The word 'pillar,' when thus used, denotes a stone, or column of wood, erected as a monument or memorial; and especially a memorial of some manifestation of God or of his favour. Before temples were known, such pillars would naturally be erected; and the description here means simply that JEHOVAH would be worshipped in Egypt. ¶ *At the border thereof.* Not in one place merely, but in all parts of Egypt. It is not improbable that the *name* of JEHOVAH, or some rude designation of the nature of his worship, would be inscribed on such pillars. It

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20 And it shall be for a [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 saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.

[a] Jos. 4. 20.

is known that the Egyptians were accustomed to rear pillars, monuments, obelisks, &c., to commemorate great events, and that the names and deeds of illustrious persons were engraven on them; and the prophet here says, that such monuments should be reared to JEHOVAH. In regard to the fulfilment of this prophecy, there can be no question. After the time of Alexander the Great, large numbers of Jews were settled in Egypt. They were favoured by the Ptolemies, and they became so numerous that it was deemed necessary that their Scriptures should be translated into Greek for their use, and accordingly the translation called the Septuagint was made. See Introduction, § 8, 1, (1).

20. *And it shall be for a sign.* The altar, and the pillar. This shows that the altar was not to be for sacrifice, but was a *memorial*, or designed to designate a place of worship. ¶ *They shall cry to the* LORD *because of the oppressors.* That is, oppressed and borne down under the exactions of their rulers, they shall seek deliverance from the true God—one instance among many of the effect of affliction and oppression in leading men to embrace the true religion. ¶ *And he shall send them a saviour.* Who this *saviour* would be, has been a subject on which there has been a great difference of opinion. Grotius supposes that it would be *the angel* by which the army of Sennacherib would be destroyed. Gesenius thinks it was Psammetichus, who would deliver them from the tyranny of the eleven kings who were contending with each other, or that, since in ver. 4, he is called a 'severe lord,' it is probable that the promise here is to be understood of a delivering or protecting angel. But it is evident that some person is here denoted who would be sent *subsequently* to the national judgments which are here designated. Dr. Gill supposes that by the saviour here is meant the Messiah; but this interpretation does not suit the connection, for it is evident that the event here predicted, was to take place before the coming of Christ. Vitringa and Bishop Newton suppose with more probability that Alexander the Great is here referred to, who took possession of Egypt after his conquest in the East, and who might be called *a saviour*, inasmuch as he delivered them from the reign of the oppressive kings who had tyrannized there, and inasmuch as his reign and the reigns of those who succeeded him in Egypt, would be much more mild than that of the former kings of that country. That Alexander the Great was regarded by the Egyptians as a saviour or deliverer, is apparent from history. Upon his coming to Egypt, the people submitted to him cheerfully, out of hatred to the Persians, so that he became master of the country without any opposition (Diod. Sic. xvii. 49; Arrian, iii. 3, 1; Q. Curtius, iv. 7, 8, as quoted by Newton). He treated them with much kindness; built the city of Alexandria, calling it after his own name, designing to make it the capital of his empire; and under him and the Ptolemies who succeeded him, trade revived, commerce flourished, learning was patronized, and peace and plenty blessed the land. Among other things, Alexander transplanted many Jews into Alexandria, and granted them many privileges, equal to the Macedonians themselves (*Jos. Bell. Jud.* ii. 18, 7; *Contra Ap.* ii. 4). 'The arrival of Alexander,' says Wilkinson (*Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 213, 214), 'was greeted with universal satisfaction. Their hatred of the Persians, and their frequent alliances with the Greeks, who had fought under the same banners against a common enemy, naturally taught the Egyptians to welcome the Macedonian army with the strongest demonstrations of friendship, and to consider their coming as a direct interposition of the gods; and so wise and considerate was the conduct of the early Ptolemies, that they almost ceased to regret the period when they were

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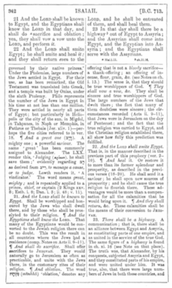

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21 And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do [a] sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform *it*.

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.

23 In that day shall there be a highway [b] 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.

[a] Mal.1.11. [b] ch.11.16.

governed by their native princes.' Under the Ptolemies, large numbers of the Jews settled in Egypt. For their use, as has been remarked, the Old Testament was translated into Greek, and a temple was built by Onias, under the sixth Ptolemy. Philo represents the number of the Jews in Egypt in his time at not less than one million. They were settled in nearly all parts of Egypt; but particularly in Heliopolis or the city of the sun, in Migdol, in Tahpanes, in Noph or Memphis, in Pathros or Thebais (Jer. xliv. 1)—perhaps the five cities referred to in ver. 18. ¶ *And a great one* (רָב). A mighty one; a powerful saviour. The name 'great' has been commonly assigned to Alexander. The LXX. render this, 'Judging (κρίνων), he shall save them;' evidently regarding רָב as derived from רִיב, *to manage a cause, or to judge*. Lowth renders it, 'A vindicator.' The word means *great, mighty;* and is repeatedly applied to a prince, chief, or captain (2 Kings xxv. 8; Esth. i. 8; Dan. i. 3; ii. 48; v. 11).

21. *And the* LORD *shall be known to Egypt.* Shall be worshipped and honoured by the Jews who shall dwell there, and by those who shall be proselyted to their religion. ¶ *And the Egyptians shall know the* LORD. That many of the Egyptians would be converted to the Jewish religion there can be no doubt. This was the result in all countries where the Jews had a residence (comp. Notes on Acts ii. 9–11). ¶ *And shall do sacrifice.* Shall offer sacrifices to JEHOVAH. They would naturally go to Jerusalem as often as practicable, and unite with the Jews there, in the customary rites of their religion. ¶ *And oblation.* The word מִנְחָה (*minhhâ*) 'oblation,' denotes any offering that is not a *bloody* sacrifice—a thank-offering; an offering of incense, flour, grain, &c. (see Notes on ch. i. 13.) The sense is, that they should be true worshippers of God. ¶ *They shall vow a vow, &c.* They shall be sincere and true worshippers of God. The large numbers of the Jews that dwelt there; the fact that many of them doubtless were sincere; the circumstances recorded (Acts ii. 9–11), that Jews were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; and the fact that the true religion was carried to Egypt, and the Christian religion established there, all show how fully this prediction was fulfilled.

22. *And the* LORD *shall smite Egypt.* That is, in the manner described in the previous part of this prophecy (ver. 2–10). ¶ *And heal it.* Or restore it to more than its former splendour and prosperity, as described in the previous verses (18–20). He shall send it a saviour; he shall open new sources of prosperity; and he shall cause the true religion to flourish there. These advantages would be more than a compensation for all the calamities that he would bring upon it. ¶ *And they shall return, &c.* These calamities shall be the means of their conversion to JEHOVAH.

23. *There shall be a highway.* A communication; that is, there shall be an alliance between Egypt and Assyria, as constituting parts of one empire, and as united in the service of the true God. The same figure of a *highway* is found in ch. xi. 16 (see Note on that place). The truth was, that Alexander, by his conquests, subjected Assyria and Egypt, and they constituted parts of his empire, and were united under him. It was true, also, that there were large numbers of Jews in both these countries, and

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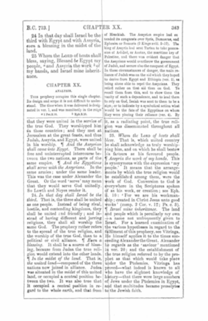

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.

25 Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed *be* Egypt my people, [a]and Assyria the work [b]of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

[a] 1 Pet.2.10. [b] Eph.2.10.

CHAPTER XX.

ANALYSIS.

THIS prophecy occupies this single chapter. Its design and scope it is not difficult to understand. The time when it was delivered is designated in ver. 1, and was manifestly in the reign of Hezekiah. The Assyrian empire had extended its conquests over Syria, Damascus, and Ephraim or Samaria (2 Kings xviii. 9–12). The king of Assyria had sent Tartan to take possession of Ashdod, or Azotus, the maritime key of Palestine, and there was evident danger that the Assyrians would overthrow the government of Judah, and secure also the conquest of Egypt. In these circumstances of danger, the main reliance of Judah was on the aid which they hoped to derive from Egypt and Ethiopia (ver. 5), as being alone able to repel the Assyrians. They relied rather on that aid than on God. To recall them from this, and to show them the vanity of such a dependence, and to lead them to rely on God, Isaiah was sent to them to be a sign; or to indicate by a symbolical action what would be the fate of the Egyptians on whom they were placing their reliance (ver. 4). By

that they were united in the service of the true God. They worshipped him in those countries; and they met at Jerusalem at the great feasts, and thus Judah, Assyria, and Egypt, were united in his worship. ¶ *And the Assyrian shall come into Egypt.* There shall be free and uninterrupted intercourse between the two nations, as parts of the same empire. ¶ *And the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.* In the same armies; under the same leader. This was the case under Alexander the Great. Or the word 'serve' may mean that they would serve God unitedly. So Lowth and Noyes render it.

24. *In that day shall Israel be the third.* That is, the three shall be united as one people. Instead of being rival, hostile, and contending kingdoms, they shall be united and friendly; and instead of having different and jarring religions, they shall all worship the same God. The prophecy rather refers to the spread of the true religion, and the worship of the true God, than to a political or civil alliance. ¶ *Even a blessing.* It shall be a source of blessing, because from Judea the true religion would extend into the other lands. ¶ *In the midst of the land.* That is, *the united land*—composed of the three nations now joined in alliance. Judea was situated in the *midst* of this united land, or occupied a central position between the two. It was also true that it occupied a central position in regard to the whole earth, and that from it, as a radiating point, the true religion was disseminated throughout all nations.

25. *Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless.* That is, which united country he shall acknowledge as truly worshipping him, and on which he shall bestow his favours as his favoured people. ¶ *Assyria the work of my hands.* This is synonymous with the expression 'my people.' It means that the arrangements by which the true religion would be established among them, were the work of God. Conversion to God is everywhere in the Scriptures spoken of as his work, or creation; see Eph. ii. 10: 'For we are his workmanship; created in Christ Jesus unto good works' (comp. 2 Cor. v. 17; Ps. c. 3). ¶ *Israel mine inheritance.* The land and people which is peculiarly my own —a name not unfrequently given to Israel. For a learned examination of the various hypotheses in regard to the fulfilment of this prophecy, see Vitringa. He himself applies it to the times succeeding Alexander the Great. Alexander he regards as the 'saviour' mentioned in ver. 20; and the establishment of the true religion referred to by the prophet as that which would take place under the Ptolemies. Vitringa has proved—what indeed is known to all who have the slightest knowledge of history—that there were large numbers of Jews under the Ptolemies in Egypt, and that multitudes became proselytes to the Jewish faith.

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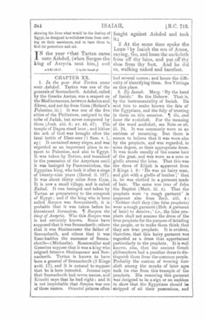

showing the Jews what would be the destiny of Egypt, he designed to withdraw them from resting on their assistance, and to turn them to God for protection and aid.

IN the year [a]that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod and took it;

2 At the same time spake the LORD [1]by Isaiah the son of 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.

[a] 2 Ki.18.17. [1] by the hand of.

CHAPTER XX.

1. *In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod.* Tartan was one of the generals of Sennacherib. Ashdod, called by the Greeks Azotus, was a seaport on the Mediterranean, between Askelon and Ekron, and not far from Gaza (Reland's *Palestine*, iii.) It was one of the five cities of the Philistines, assigned to the tribe of Judah, but never conquered by them (Josh. xiii. 8; xv. 46, 47). The temple of Dagon stood here; and hither the ark of God was brought after the fatal battle of Eben-ezer (1 Sam. v. 1, *sq.*) It sustained many sieges, and was regarded as an important place in respect to Palestine, and also to Egypt. It was taken by Tartan, and remained in the possession of the Assyrians until it was besieged by Psammetichus, the Egyptian king, who took it after a siege of twenty-nine years (Herod. ii. 157). It was about thirty miles from Gaza. It is now a small village, and is called *Esdud*. It was besieged and taken by Tartan as preparatory to the conquest of Egypt; and if the king who is here called *Sargon* was Sennacherib, it is probable that it was taken before he threatened Jerusalem. ¶ *Sargon the king of Assyria.* Who this *Sargon* was is not certainly known. Some have supposed that it was Sennacherib; others that it was Shalmaneser the father of Sennacherib, and others that it was Esar-haddon the successor of Sennacherib—(Michaelis). Rosenmüller and Gesenius suppose that it was a king who reigned *between* Shalmaneser and Sennacherib. Tartan is known to have been a general of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 17), and it is natural to suppose that he is here intended. Jerome says that Sennacherib had seven names, and Kimchi says that he had eight; and it is not improbable that *Sargon* was one of those names. Oriental princes often had several names; and hence the difficulty of identifying them. See Vitringa on this place.

2. *By Isaiah.* Marg. 'By the hand of Isaiah.' So the Hebrew. That is, by the instrumentality of Isaiah. He sent *him* to make known the fate of the Egyptians, and the folly of trusting in them on this occasion. ¶ *Go, and loose the sackcloth.* For the meaning of the word *sackcloth*, see Note on ch. iii. 24. It was commonly worn as an emblem of mourning. But there is reason to believe that it was worn also by the prophets, and was regarded, in some degree, as their appropriate dress. It was made usually of the coarse hair of the goat, and was worn as a zone or girdle around the loins. That this was the dress of Elijah is apparent from 2 Kings i. 8: 'He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather;' that is, he was clothed in a garment made of hair. The same was true of John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 4). That the prophets wore 'a rough garment' is apparent also from Zech. xiii. 4: 'Neither shall they (the false prophets) wear a rough garment (Heb. A garment of hair) to deceive;' *i.e.*, the false prophets shall not assume the dress of the true prophets for the purpose of deluding the people, or to make them think that they are true prophets. It is evident, therefore, that this hairy garment was regarded as a dress that appertained particularly to the prophets. It is well known, also, that the ancient Greek philosophers had a peculiar dress to distinguish them from the common people. Probably the custom of wearing *hair cloth* among the monks of later ages took its rise from this example of the prophets. His removing this garment was designed to be a sign or an emblem to show that the Egyptians should be stripped of all their possessions, and

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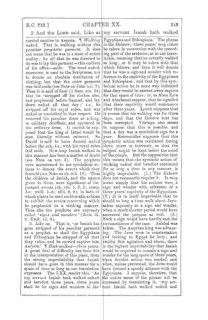

3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked

carried captive to Assyria. ¶ *Walking naked.* That is, walking *without this peculiar prophetic garment.* It does not mean that he was in a state of entire nudity; for all that he was directed to do was to lay this garment—this emblem of his office—aside. The word *naked*, moreover, is used in the Scriptures, not to denote an absolute destitution of clothing, but that the *outer* garment was laid aside (see Note on John xxi. 7). Thus it is said of Saul (1 Sam. xix. 24) that he 'stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day;' *i.e.*, he stripped off his royal robes, and was *naked* or *unclothed* in that respect. He removed his *peculiar* dress as a king, or military chieftain, and appeared in the ordinary dress. It cannot be supposed that the king of Israel would be seen literally without raiment. So David is said to have danced *naked* before the ark, *i.e.*, with his royal robes laid aside. How *long* Isaiah walked in this manner has been a matter of doubt (see Note on ver. 3). The prophets were accustomed to use symbolical actions to denote the events which they foretold (see Note on ch. viii. 18). Thus the children of Isaiah, and the names given to them, were significant of important events (ch. viii. 1, 2, 3; comp. Jer. xviii. 1–6; xliii. 8, 9); in both of which places he used emblematic actions to exhibit the events concerning which he prophesied in a striking manner. Thus also the prophets are expressly called '*signs and wonders*' (Zech. iii. 8; Ezek. xii. 6).

3. *Like as.* That is, 'as Isaiah has gone stripped of his peculiar garment as a prophet, so shall the Egyptians and Ethiopians be stripped of all that they value, and be carried captive into Assyria.' ¶ *Hath walked—three years.* A great deal of difficulty has been felt in the interpretation of this place, from the strong improbability that Isaiah should have gone in this manner for a space of time so long as our translation expresses. The LXX. render this, 'As my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years, three years shall be for signs and wonders to the Egyptians and Ethiopians.' The phrase in the Hebrew, 'three years,' may either be taken in connection with the preceding part of the sentence, as in our translation, meaning that he actually walked so long; or it may be taken with that which follows, and then it will denote that he was a sign and wonder with reference to the captivity of the Egyptians and Ethiopians; and that by this symbolical action he in some way indicated that they would be carried away captive for that space of time; or, as Aben Ezra and Abarbanel suppose, that he signified that their captivity would commence after three years. Lowth supposes that it means that his walking was for three days, and that the Hebrew text has been corrupted. Vitringa also seems to suppose that this is possible, and that a day was a symbolical sign for a year. Rosenmüller supposes that this prophetic action was continued during three years *at intervals*, so that the subject might be kept before the mind of the people. But the supposition that this means that the symbolic action of walking naked and barefoot continued for so long a time in any manner, is highly improbable. (1.) The Hebrew does not necessarily require it. It may mean simply that his actions were a sign and wonder with reference to a three years' captivity of the Egyptians. (2.) It is in itself improbable that he should so long a time walk about Jerusalem expressly as a sign and wonder, when a much shorter period would have answered the purpose as well. (3.) Such a sign would have hardly met the circumstances of the case. Ashdod was taken. The Assyrian king was advancing. The Jews were in consternation and looking to Egypt for help; and amidst this agitation and alarm, there is the highest improbability that Isaiah would be required to remain a sign and wonder for the long space of three years, when decided action was needed, and when, unless prevented, the Jews would have formed a speedy alliance with the Egyptians. I suppose, therefore, that the entire sense of the phrase will be expressed by translating it, 'my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and

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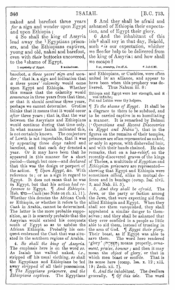

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naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;

4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the [1]Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the [2]shame of Egypt.

5 And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

6 And the inhabitant of this isle[3] shall say in that day, Behold, such [4]*is* our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

[1] captivity of Egypt. [2] nakedness. [3] or, country, Jer. 47. 4. [4] Job 6. 20.

barefoot, *a three years' sign and wonder;*' that is, a sign and indication that *a three years' calamity* would come upon Egypt and Ethiopia. Whether this means that the calamity would *commence* in three years from that time, or that it should *continue* three years, perhaps we cannot determine. Grotius thinks that it means that it would occur *after* three years; that is, that the war between the Assyrians and Ethiopians would continue during that time only. In what manner Isaiah indicated this, is not certainly known. The conjecture of Lowth is not improbable, that it was by appearing three *days* naked and barefoot, and that each day denoted a year. Or it may have been that he appeared in this manner for a short period—though but once—and *declared* that this was the design or purport of the action. ¶ *Upon Egypt, &c.* With reference to; or as a sign in regard to Egypt. It does not mean that he was *in* Egypt, but that his action *had reference to* Egypt. ¶ *And Ethiopia.* Heb. כוש—*Cush* (see Note on ch. xi. 11). Whether this denotes the African Cush or Ethiopia, or whether it refers to the *Cush* in Arabia, cannot be determined. The latter is the more probable supposition, as it is scarcely probable that the Assyrian would extend his conquests south of Egypt so as to subdue the African Ethiopia. Probably his conquest embraced the *Cush* that was situated in the southern regions of Arabia.

4. *So shall the king of Assyria.* The emphasis here is on the word *so.* As Isaiah has walked naked, *i.e.*, stripped off his usual clothing, *so* shall the Egyptians and Ethiopians be led away *stripped* of all their possessions. ¶ *The Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives.* The Egyptians and Ethiopians, or Cushites, were often united in an alliance, and appear to have been when this prophecy was delivered. Thus Nahum iii. 9:

Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite;
Put and Lubim were thy helpers.

¶ *To the shame of Egypt.* It shall be a disgrace to them to be subdued, and to be carried captive in so humiliating a manner. It is remarked by Belzoni ('*Operations and Recent Discoveries in Egypt and Nubia*'), that in the figures on the remains of their temples, prisoners are often represented as naked, or only in aprons, with dishevelled hair, and with their hands chained. He also remarks, that on a *bas-relief*, on the recently-discovered graves of the kings of Thebes, a multitude of *Egyptian* and *Ethiopian prisoners* are represented—showing that Egypt and Ethiopia were sometimes *allied*, alike in mutual defence and in bondage (comp. Isa. xlvii. 2, and Nah. iii. 5).

5. *And they shall be afraid.* The Jews, or the party or faction among the Jews, that were expecting aid from allied Ethiopia and Egypt. When they shall see them vanquished, they shall apprehend a similar danger to themselves; and they shall be ashamed that they ever confided in a people so little able to aid them, instead of trusting in the arm of God. ¶ *Egypt their glory.* Their boast, as if Egypt was able to save them. The word here rendered 'glory' ([illegible]) means properly, *ornament, praise, honour;* and then it may mean the *object* of glory, or that in which men boast or confide. That is its sense here (comp. Isa. x. 12; xiii. 19; Zech. xii. 7).

6. *And the inhabitant.* The dwellers generally. ¶ *Of this isle.* The word

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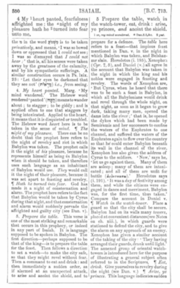

4 My [1]heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the [a]night of my pleasure hath he [2]turned into fear unto me.

5 Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, *and* anoint the shield.

[1] or, *my mind wandered.* [a] Dan.5.5,&c. [2] put.

the מ in the word מִשְּׁמֹעַ is to be taken *privatively*, and means, 'I was so bowed down or oppressed that I *could not* see; I was so dismayed that *I could not hear*;' that is, all his senses were taken away by the greatness of the calamity, and by his sympathetic sufferings. A similar construction occurs in Ps. lxix. 23: 'Let their eyes be darkened that they see not' (מֵרְאוֹת) *i.e.*, *from* seeing.

4. *My heart panted.* Marg. 'My mind wandered.' The Hebrew word rendered 'panted' (תָּעָה) means to wander about; to stagger; to be giddy; and is applied often to one that staggers by being intoxicated. Applied to the heart, it means that it is disquieted or troubled. The Hebrew word *heart* here is to be taken in the sense of *mind*. ¶ *The night of my pleasure.* There can be no doubt that the prophet here refers to the night of revelry and riot in which Babylon was taken. The prophet calls it the night of *his* pleasure, because he represents himself as being *in* Babylon when it should be taken, and therefore uses such language as an inhabitant of Babylon would use. *They* would call it the night of their pleasure, because it was set apart to feasting and revelry. ¶ *Hath he turned into fear.* God has made it a night of consternation and alarm. The prophet here refers to the fact that Babylon would be taken by Cyrus during that night, and that consternation and alarm would suddenly pervade the affrighted and guilty city (see Dan. v).

5. *Prepare the table.* This verse is one of the most striking and remarkable that occurs in this prophecy, or indeed in any part of Isaiah. It is language supposed to be spoken in Babylon. The first direction—perhaps supposed to be that of the king—is to prepare the table for the feast. Then follows a direction to set a watch—to make the city safe, so that they might revel without fear. Then a command to eat and drink: and then immediately a sudden order, as if alarmed at an unexpected attack, to arise and anoint the shield, and to prepare for a defence. The *table* here refers to a feast—that impious feast mentioned in Dan. v. in the night in which Babylon was taken, and Belshazzar slain. Herodotus (i. 195), Xenophon (*Cyr.* 7, 5), and Daniel (v.) all agree in the account that Babylon was taken in the night in which the king and his nobles were engaged in feasting and revelry. The words of Xenophon are, 'But Cyrus, when he heard that there was to be such a feast in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians would drink and revel through the whole night, on that night, as soon as it began to grow dark, taking many men, opened the dams into the river;' that is, he opened the dykes which had been made by Semiramis and her successors to confine the waters of the Euphrates to one channel, and suffered the waters of the Euphrates again to flow over the country so that he could enter Babylon beneath its wall in the channel of the river. Xenophon has also given the address of Cyrus to the soldiers. 'Now,' says he, 'let us go against them. Many of them are asleep; many of them are intoxicated; and all of them are unfit for battle (ἀσύντακτοι).' Herodotus says (i. 191), 'It was a day of festivity among them, and while the citizens were engaged in dance and merriment, Babylon was, for the first time, thus taken.' Compare the account in Daniel v. ¶ *Watch in the watch-tower.* Place a guard so that the city shall be secure. Babylon had on its walls many *towers*, placed at convenient distances (see Notes on ch. xiii.), in which guards were stationed to defend the city, and to give the alarm on any approach of an enemy. Xenophon has given a *similar* account of the taking of the city: 'They having arranged their guards, drank until light.' The annexed group of oriental watch-towers is introduced here for the purpose of illustrating a general subject often referred to in the Scriptures. ¶ *Eat, drink.* Give yourselves to revelry during the night (see Dan. v.) ¶ *Arise, ye princes.* This language indicates sudden

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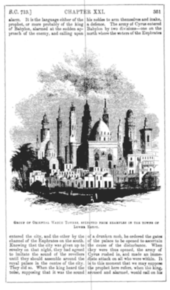

alarm. It is the language either of the prophet, or more probably of the king of Babylon, alarmed at the sudden approach of the enemy, and calling upon his nobles to arm themselves and make a defence. The army of Cyrus entered Babylon by two divisions—one on the north where the waters of the Euphrates entered the city, and the other by the channel of the Euphrates on the south. Knowing that the city was given up to revelry on that night, they had agreed to imitate the sound of the revellers until they should assemble around the royal palace in the centre of the city. They did so. When the king heard the noise, supposing that it was the sound of a drunken mob, he ordered the gates of the palace to be opened to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. When they were thus opened, the army of Cyrus rushed in, and made an immediate attack on all who were within. It is to this moment that we may suppose the prophet here refers, when the king, aroused and alarmed, would call on his

Group of Oriental Watch Towers, selected from examples in the towns of Lower Egypt.

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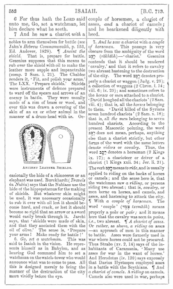

6 For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

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 heed.

nobles to arm themselves for battle (see Jahn's *Hebrew Commonwealth*, p. 153, Ed. Andover, 1828). ¶ *Anoint the shield.* That is, prepare for battle. Gesenius supposes that this means to rub over the shield with oil to make the leather more supple and impenetrable (comp. 2 Sam. i. 21). The Chaldee renders it, 'Fit, and polish your arms.' The LXX. 'Prepare shields.' Shields were instruments of defence prepared to ward off the spears and arrows of an enemy in battle. They were usually made of a rim of brass or wood, and over this was drawn a covering of the skin of an ox or other animal in the manner of a drum-head with us. Occasionally the hide of a rhinoceros or an elephant was used. Burckhardt (*Travels in Nubia*) says that the Nubians use the hide of the hippopotamus for the making of shields. But whatever skin might be used, it was necessary occasionally to rub it over with oil lest it should become hard, and crack, or lest it should become so rigid that an arrow or a sword would easily break through it. Jarchi says, that 'shields were made of skin, and that they anointed them with the oil of olive.' The sense is, 'Prepare your arms! Make ready for battle!'

Ancient Leather Shields.

6. *Go, set a watchman.* This was said to Isaiah in the vision. He represents himself as in Babylon, and as hearing God command him to set a watchman on the watch-tower who would announce what was to come to pass. All this is designed merely to bring the manner of the destruction of the city more vividly before the eye.

7. *And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen.* This passage is very obscure from the ambiguity of the word רֶכֶב (*rĕkhĕbh*)—'chariot.' Gesenius contends that it should be rendered 'cavalry,' and that it refers to cavalry two abreast hastening to the destruction of the city. The word רֶכֶב denotes properly a chariot or waggon (Judg. v. 28); a collection of waggons (2 Chron. i. 14; viii. 6; ix. 25); and sometimes refers to the *horses* or *men* attached to a chariot. 'David houghed all the chariots' (2 Sam. viii. 4); that is, all the *horses* belonging to them. 'David killed of the Syrians seven hundred chariots' (2 Sam. x. 18); that is, all *the men* belonging to seven hundred chariots. According to the present Masoretic pointing, the word רֶכֶב does not mean, perhaps, anything else than a chariot strictly, but other forms of the word with the same letters denote *riders* or *cavalry*. Thus, the word רַכָּב denotes a horseman (2 Kings ix. 17); a charioteer or driver of a chariot (1 Kings xxii. 34; Jer. li. 21). The verb רָכַב means *to ride*, and is usually applied to riding on the backs of horses or camels; and the sense here is, that the watchman saw *a riding*, or persons riding two abreast; that is, *cavalry*, or men borne on horses, and camels, and asses, and hastening to attack the city. ¶ *With a couple of horsemen.* The word 'couple' (צֶמֶד *tzemĕdh*) means properly a yoke or *pair*; and it means here that the cavalry was seen *in pairs*, *i.e.*, two abreast. ¶ *A chariot of asses.* Or rather, as above, *a riding* on asses—an approach of men in this manner to battle. Asses were formerly used in war where horses could not be procured. Thus Strabo (xv. 2, 14) says of the inhabitants of Caramania, 'Many use asses for war in the want of horses.' And Herodotus (iv. 129) says expressly that Darius Hystaspes employed asses in a battle with the Scythians. ¶ *And a chariot of camels.* A *riding* on camels. Camels also were used in war, perhaps

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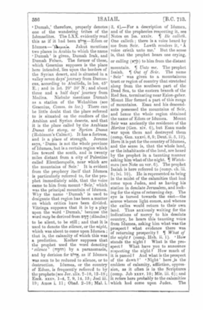

'Dumah,' therefore, properly denotes one of the wandering tribes of the Ishmaelites. The LXX. evidently read this as if it had been אֱדוֹם—Edom or Idumea—Ἰδουμαία. Jakut mentions two places in Arabia to which the name 'Dumah' is given, Dumah Irak, and Dumah Felsen. The former of these, which Gesenius supposes is the place here intended, lies upon the borders of the Syrian desert, and is situated in a valley seven days' journey from Damascus, according to Abulfeda, in lon. 45° E.; and in lat. 29° 30′ N; and about three and a half days' journey from Medina. Niebuhr mentions Dumah as a station of the Wehabites (see Gesenius, *Comm. in loc.*) There can be little doubt that the place referred to is situated on the confines of the Arabian and Syrian deserts, and that it is the place called by the Arabians *Duma the stony*, or *Syrian Duma* (Robinson's Calmet). It has a *fortress*, and is a place of strength. Jerome says, 'Duma is not the whole province of Idumea, but is a certain region which lies toward the south, and is twenty miles distant from a city of Palestine called Eleutheropolis, near which are the mountains of Seir.' It is evident from the prophecy itself that Idumea is particularly referred to, for the prophet immediately adds, that the voice came to him from mount 'Seir,' which was the principal mountain of Idumea. Why the name 'Dumah' is used to designate that region has been a matter on which critics have been divided. Vitringa supposes that it is by a play upon the word 'Dumah,' because the word may be derived from דּוּמָם (dûmâm) to be silent, to be still; and that it is used to denote the *silence*, or the *night*, which was about to come upon Idumea; that is, the calamity of which this was a prediction. Kocher supposes that the prophet used the word denoting '*silence*' (דּוּמָה) by a paranomasia, and by derision for אֱדוֹם, as if Idumea was soon to be reduced to silence, or to destruction. Idumea, or the country of Edom, is frequently referred to by the prophets (see Jer. xlix. 7–10, 12–18; Ezek. xxxv. 1–4, 7, 9, 14, 15; Joel iii. 19; Amos i. 11; Obad. 2–18; Mal. i. 3, 4).—For a description of Idumea, and of the prophecies respecting it, see Notes on Isa. xxxiv. ¶ *He calleth.* One calleth; there is a voice heard by me from Seir. Lowth renders it, 'A voice crieth unto me.' But the sense is, that the prophet hears one crying, or calling (קֹרֵא) to him from the distant mountain. ¶ *Unto me.* The prophet Isaiah. ¶ *Out of Seir.* The name 'Seir' was given to a mountainous tract or region of country that stretched along from the southern part of the Dead Sea, to the eastern branch of the Red Sea, terminating near Ezion-geber. Mount Hor formed a part of this range of mountains. Esau and his descendants possessed the mountains of Seir, and hence the whole region obtained the name of Edom or Idumea. Mount Seir was anciently the residence of the *Horites* (Gen. xiv. 6), but Esau made war upon them and destroyed them (comp. Gen. xxxvi. 8, 9; Deut. ii. 5, 12). Here it is put for the country of Idumea, and the sense is, that the whole land, or the inhabitants of the land, are heard by the prophet in a taunting manner asking him what of the night. ¶ *Watchman* (see Note on ver. 6). The prophet Isaiah is here referred to (comp. ch. lii. 8; lvi. 10). He is represented as being in the midst of the calamities that had come upon Judea, and as having his station in desolate Jerusalem, and looking for the signs of returning day. The eye is turned towards the east—the source whence light comes, and whence the exiles would return to their own land. Thus anxiously waiting for the indications of mercy to his desolate country, he hears this taunting voice from Idumea, asking him what was the prospect? what evidence there was of returning prosperity? ¶ *What of the night?* (comp. Hab. ii. 1). 'How stands the night? What is the prospect? What have you to announce respecting the night? How much of it is passed? And what is the prospect of the dawn?' 'Night' here is the emblem of calamity, affliction, oppression, as it often is in the Scriptures (comp. Job xxxv. 10; Mic. iii. 6); and it refers here probably to the calamities which had come upon Judea. The

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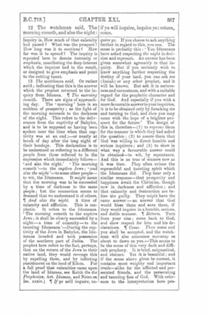

12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.

inquiry is, How much of that calamity had passed? What was the prospect? How long was it to continue? How far was it to spread? The inquiry is *repeated* here to denote *intensity* or *emphasis*, manifesting the deep interest which the inquirer had in the result, or designed to give emphasis and point to the cutting taunt.

12. *The watchman said.* Or rather *saith*; indicating that this is the answer which the prophet returned to the inquiry from Idumea. ¶ *The morning cometh.* There are signs of approaching day. The 'morning' here is an emblem of prosperity; as the light of the morning succeeds to the darkness of the night. This refers to the deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, and is to be supposed as having been spoken near the time when that captivity was at an end;—or nearly at break of day after the long night of their bondage. This declaration is to be understood as referring to a different people from those referred to in the expression which immediately follows—'and also the night.' 'The morning cometh'—to the captive *Jews*; '*and also the night*'—to some other people—to wit, the Idumeans. It *might* mean that the morning was to be succeeded by a time of darkness to the same people; but the connection seems to demand that we understand it of others. ¶ *And also the night.* A time of calamity and affliction. This is emphatic. It refers to the Idumeans. 'The morning cometh to the captive Jews; it shall be *closely* succeeded by a night—a time of calamity—to the taunting Idumeans.'—During the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, the Idumeans invaded and took possession of the southern part of Judea. The prophet here refers to the fact, perhaps, that on the return of the Jews to their native land, they would revenge this by expelling them, and by inflicting punishment on the land of Edom. For a full proof that calamities came upon the land of Idumea, see Keith *On the Prophecies*, Art. *Idumea*, and Notes on Isa. xxxiv.) ¶ *If ye will inquire, inquire ye.* If you choose to ask anything further in regard to this, you can. The sense is probably this: 'You Idumeans have asked respecting *the night* in derision and reproach. An answer has been given somewhat agreeably *to* that inquiry. But if you seriously wish to know anything further respecting the destiny of your land, you can ask me (Isaiah) or any other prophet, and it will be known. But ask it in seriousness and earnestness, and with a suitable regard for the prophetic character and for God. And especially if you wish a more favourable answer to your inquiries, it is to be obtained only by forsaking sin and turning to God, and *then* you may come with the hope of a brighter prospect for the future.' The design of this is, therefore—(1) to *reprove* them for the manner in which they had asked the question; (2) to assure them that God was willing to direct humble and serious inquirers; and (3) to show in what way a favourable answer could be obtained—to wit, by repentance. And this is as true of sinners now as it was then. *They* often evince the reproachful and taunting spirit which the Idumeans did. *They* hear only a similar response—that prosperity and happiness await the Christian, though now in darkness and affliction; and that calamity and destruction are before the guilty. They *might* have the same answer—an answer that God would bless them and save them, if they would inquire in a humble, serious, and docile manner. ¶ *Return.* Turn from your sins; come back to God, and show respect for him and his declarations. ¶ *Come. Then* come and you shall be accepted, and the watchman will also announce *morning* as about to dawn on you.—This seems to be the sense of this very dark and difficult prophecy. It is brief, enigmatical, and obscure. Yet it is beautiful; and if the sense above given be correct, it contains most weighty and important truth—alike for the afflicted and persecuted friends, and the persecuting and taunting foes of God. With reference to the interpretation here pro-

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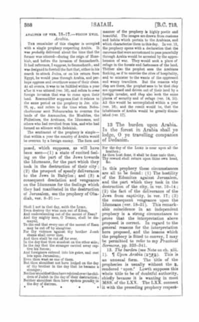

ANALYSIS OF VER. 13–17.—VISION XVIII. *Arabia.*

THE remainder of this chapter is occupied with a single prophecy respecting Arabia. It was *probably* delivered about the time that the former was uttered—during the reign of Hezekiah, and before the invasion of Sennacherib. It had reference, I suppose, to Sennacherib; and was designed to foretell the fact that, either in his march to attack Judea, or on his return from Egypt, he would pass through Arabia, and perhaps oppress and overthrow some of their clans. At all events, it was to be fulfilled within a year after it was uttered (ver. 16), and refers to *some* foreign invasion that was to come upon their land. Rosenmüller supposes that it relates to the same period as the prophecy in Jer. xlix. 28, *sq.*, and refers to the time when Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan to overrun the lands of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, the Arabians, the Idumeans, and others who had revolted from him, and who had formed an alliance with Zedekiah.

The sentiment of the prophecy is simple—that within a year the country of Arabia would be overrun by a foreign enemy. The form and manner of the prophecy is highly poetic and beautiful. The images are drawn from customs and habits which pertain to the Arabians, and which characterize them to this day. In ver. 13, the prophecy opens with a declaration that the caravans that were accustomed to pass peacefully through Arabia would be arrested by the apprehension of war. They would seek a place of refuge in the forests and fastnesses of the land. Thither also the prophet sees the Arabians flocking, as if to exercise the rites of hospitality, and to minister to the wants of the oppressed and weary travellers. But the reasons why *they* are there, the prophet sees to be that *they* are oppressed and driven out of their land by a foreign invader, and *they* also seek the same places of security and of refuge (ver. 14, 15). All this would be accomplished within a year (ver. 16); and the result would be, that the inhabitants of Arabia would be greatly diminished (ver. 17).

13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

posed, which supposes, as will have been seen—(1) a state of excited feeling on the part of the Jews towards the Idumeans, for the part which they took in the destruction of their city; (2) the prospect of speedy deliverance to the Jews in Babylon; and (3) a consequent desolation and vengeance on the Idumeans for the feelings which they had manifested in the destruction of Jerusalem, see the prophecy of Obadiah, ver. 8–21:—

Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD,
Even destroy the wise men out of Edom,
And understanding out of the mount of Esau?
And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed,
To the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.
For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee,
And thou shalt be cut off for ever.
In the day that thou stoodest on the other side;
In the day that the stranger carried away captive his forces;
And foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem;
Even thou wast as one of them.
But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger;
Neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;
Neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.

* * * * *

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen;
As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee;
Thy reward shall return upon thine own head, &c.

In this prophecy these circumstances are all to be found: (1) The hostility of the Edomites against Jerusalem, and the part which they took in the destruction of the city, in ver. 10–14; (2) the fact of the deliverance of the Jews from captivity, in ver. 17; (3) the consequent vengeance upon the Idumeans (ver. 18–21). This remarkable coincidence in an independent prophecy is a strong circumstance to prove that the interpretation above proposed is correct. In regard to the general reasons for the interpretation here proposed, and the lessons which the prophecy is fitted to convey, I may be permitted to refer to my *Practical Sermons*, pp. 325–341.

13. *The burden* (see Note on ch. xiii. 1). ¶ *Upon Arabia* (בַּעְרָב). This is an unusual form. The title of the prophecies is usually without the ב, rendered 'upon.' Lowth supposes this whole title to be of doubtful authority, chiefly because it is wanting in most MSS. of the LXX. The LXX. connect it with the preceding prophecy respect-

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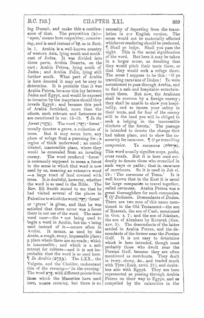

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ing Dumah, and make this a continuance of that. The preposition (בְּ)—'upon,' means here *respecting, concerning*, and is used instead of עַל, as in Zech. ix. 1. Arabia is a well-known country of western Asia, lying south and south-east of Judea. It was divided into three parts, Arabia Deserta, on the east; Arabia Petrea, lying south of Judea; and Arabia Felix, lying still further south. What part of Arabia is here denoted it may not be easy to determine. It is probable that it was Arabia Petrea, because this lay between Judea and Egypt, and would be exposed to invasion by the Assyrians should they invade Egypt; and because this part of Arabia furnished, more than the others, such retreats and fastnesses as are mentioned in ver. 13-15. ¶ *In the forest* (בַּיַּעַר). The word (יַעַר) 'forest' usually denotes a grove, a collection of trees. But it may mean here, any place of refuge from a pursuing foe; a region of thick underwood; an uncultivated, inaccessible place, where they would be concealed from an invading enemy. The word rendered 'forest' is commonly supposed to mean a forest in the sense in which that word is now used by us, meaning an extensive wood—a large tract of land covered with trees. It is doubtful, however, whether the word is so used in the Bible. The Rev. Eli Smith stated to me that he had visited several of the places in Palestine to which the word (יַעַר) 'forest' or 'grove' is given, and that he was satisfied that there never was a forest there in our use of the word. The same word *waar*—the י not being used to begin a word in Arabic, but the ו being used instead of it—occurs often in Arabic. It means, as used by the Arabs, a rough, stony, impassable place; a place where there are no roads; which is inaccessible; and which is a safe retreat for robbers—and it is not improbable that the word is so used here. ¶ *In Arabia* (בַּעְרַב). The LXX., the Vulgate, and the Chaldee, understand this of the *evening*—'in the evening.' The word עֶרֶב, with different points from those which the Masorites have used here, means *evening*, but there is no necessity of departing from the translation in our English version. The sense would not be materially affected whichever rendering should be preferred. ¶ *Shall ye lodge.* Shall you pass the night. This is the usual signification of the word. But here it may be taken in a larger sense, as denoting that they would pitch their tents there, or that they would seek a refuge there. The sense I suppose to be this: 'O ye travelling caravans of Dedan! Ye were accustomed to pass through Arabia, and to find a safe and hospitable entertainment there. But now, the Arabians shall be overrun by a foreign enemy; they shall be unable to show you hospitality, and to insure your safety in their tents, and for fear of the enemy still in the land you will be obliged to seek a lodging in the inaccessible thickets of the forests.' The passage is intended to denote the *change* that had taken place, and to show the *insecurity* for caravans. ¶ *O ye travelling companies.* Ye *caravans* (אֹרְחוֹת). This word usually signifies *ways, paths, cross roads*. But it is here used evidently to denote those who *travelled* in such ways or paths; that is, caravans of merchants. So it is used in Job vi. 19: 'The *caravans* of Tema.' It is well known that in the East it is usual for large companies to travel together, called *caravans*. Arabia Petrea was a great thoroughfare for such companies. ¶ *Of Dedanim.* Descendants of *Dedan*. There are two men of this name mentioned in the Old Testament—the son of Raamah, the son of Cush, mentioned in Gen. x. 7; and the son of Jokshan, the son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. xxv. 3). The descendants of the latter settled in Arabia Petrea, and the descendants of the former near the Persian Gulf. It is not easy to determine which is here intended, though most probably those who dwelt near the Persian Gulf, because they are often mentioned as merchants. They dealt in ivory, ebony, &c., and traded much with Tyre (Ezek. xxvii. 21), and doubtless also with Egypt. They are here represented as passing through Arabia Petrea on their way to Egypt, and as compelled by the calamities in the

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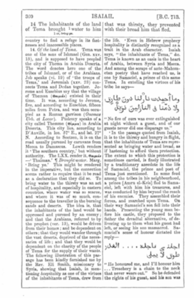

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14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought [1]water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

[1] or, *bring ye*.

country to find a refuge in its fastnesses and inaccessible places.

14. *Of the land of Tema.* Tema was one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 15), and is supposed to have peopled the city of Thema in Arabia Deserta. The word denotes here one of the tribes of Ishmael, or of the Arabians. Job speaks (vi. 19) of 'the troops of Tema,' and Jeremiah (xxv. 23) connects Tema and Dedan together. Jerome and Eusebius say that the village of Theman (Θαιμάν) existed in their time. It was, according to Jerome, five, and according to Eusebius, fifteen miles from Petra, and was then occupied as a Roman garrison (*Onomas Urb. et Locor*). Ptolemy speaks of a city called Themme (Θέμμα) in Arabia Deserta. This city lies, according to D'Anville, in lon. 57° E., and lat. 27° N. According to Seetzen, it is on the road usually pursued by caravans from Mecca to Damascus. Lowth renders it 'The southern country,' but without authority. The LXX. render it, Θαιμάν—'Thaiman.' ¶ *Brought water.* Marg. 'Bring ye.' This might be rendered in the imperative, but the connection seems rather to require that it be read as a declaration that they did so. To bring water to the thirsty was an act of hospitality, and especially in eastern countries, where water was so scarce, and where it was of so much consequence to the traveller in the burning sands and deserts. The idea is, that the inhabitants of the land would be oppressed and pursued by an enemy; and that the Arabians, referred to by the prophet (ver. 13), would be driven from their homes; and be dependent on others; that they would wander through the vast deserts, deprived of the necessaries of life; and that they would be dependent on the charity of the people of Tema for the supply of their wants. The following illustration of this passage has been kindly furnished me by the Rev. Eli Smith, missionary to Syria, showing that Isaiah, in mentioning *hospitality* as one of the virtues of the inhabitants of Tema, drew from the life. 'Even in Hebrew prophecy hospitality is distinctly recognized as a trait in the Arab character. Isaiah says, "the inhabitants of Tema," &c. Tema is known as an oasis in the heart of Arabia, between Syria and Mecca. And among the scraps of ante-Mahometan poetry that have reached us, is one by Samaciel, a prince of this same Tema. In extolling the virtues of his tribe he says—

وما أُخمِدت نارٌ لنا دون طارقٍ
ولا ذمّنا في النازلين نزيلُ

"No fire of ours was ever extinguished at night without a guest, and of our guests never did one disparage us."

'In the passage quoted from Isaiah, it is to the thirsty and hungry in flight, that the inhabitants of Tema are represented as bringing water and bread, as if hastening to afford them protection. The extent to which this protection is sometimes carried, is finely illustrated by a traditionary anecdote in the life of Samaciel, the prince and poet of Tema just mentioned. In some feud among the tribes in his neighbourhood, a prince [Amru el-Keis] fled to Samaciel, left with him his treasures, and was conducted by him beyond the reach of his enemies. They assembled their forces, and marched upon Tema. On their way Samaciel's son fell into their hands. Presenting the young man before his castle, they proposed to the father the dreadful alternative, of delivering up to them what his guest had left, or seeing his son massacred. Samaciel's sense of honour dictated the reply—

اجلني ناجله . . . . الغدر
طوق لا يبلى

"He honoured me, and I'll honour him . . . Treachery is a chain to the neck that never wears out." So he defended the rights of his guest, and his son was

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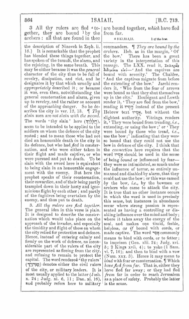

3 All thy rulers are fled [a] together, they are bound [1] by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, *which* have fled from far.

a 2 Ki.25.5,11. 1 of the bow.

the description of Nineveh in Zeph. ii. 15.) It is remarkable that the prophet has blended these things together, and has spoken of the tumult, the alarm, and the rejoicing, in the same breath. This may be either because it was the *general* character of the city thus to be full of revelry, dissipation, and riot, and he designates it by that which *usually* and *appropriately* described it; or because it was, even then, notwithstanding the general consternation and alarm, given up to revelry, and the rather on account of the approaching danger. So he describes the city in ver. 12, 13. ¶ *Thy slain men are not slain with the sword.* The words 'thy slain' here (חֲלָלַיִךְ), seem to be intended to be applied to the soldiers on whom the defence of the city rested; and to mean those who had not died an honourable death in the city in its defence, but who had *fled* in consternation, and who were either taken in their flight and made captive, or who were pursued and put to death. To be slain with the sword here is equivalent to being slain in an honourable engagement with the enemy. But here the prophet speaks of their consternation, their cowardice, and of their being partly trampled down in their hasty and ignominious flight by each other; and partly of the fugitives being overtaken by the enemy, and thus put to death.

3. *All thy rulers are fled together.* The general idea in this verse is plain. It is designed to describe the consternation which would take place on the approach of the invader, and especially the timidity and flight of those on whom the city relied for protection and defence. Hence, instead of entering calmly and firmly on the work of defence, no inconsiderable part of the rulers of the city are represented as fleeing from the city, and refusing to remain to protect the capital. The word rendered 'thy rulers' (קְצִינַיִךְ) denotes either the civil rulers of the city, or military leaders. It is most usually applied to the latter (Josh. x. 24; Judg. xi. 6, 11; Dan. xi. 18), and probably refers here to military commanders. ¶ *They are bound by the archers.* Heb. as in the margin, 'Of the bow.' There has been a great variety in the interpretation of this passage. The LXX. read it, Σκληρῶς δεδεμένοι εἰσί—'And the captives are bound with severity.' The Chaldee, 'And the captives migrate from before the extending of the bow.' Jarchi renders it, 'Who from the fear of arrows were bound so that they shut themselves up in the city.' Houbigant and Lowth render it, 'They are fled from the bow,' reading it [illegible] instead of the present Hebrew text אֻסָּרוּ, but without the slightest authority. Vitringa renders it, 'They were bound from treading, *i.e.*, extending, or using the bow;' or 'They were bound *by* those who tread, *i.e.*, use the bow;' indicating that they were so bound that they could not use the bow in defence of the city. I think that the connection here requires that the word אָסַר should be used in the sense of being *bound* or influenced by fear—they were so intimidated, so much under the influence of terror, so entirely unmanned and disabled by alarm, that they could not use the bow; or this was caused *by* the bow, *i.e.*, by the bowmen or archers who came to attack the city. It is true that no other instance occurs in which the word is used in precisely this sense, but instances in abundance occur where strong passion is represented as having a controlling or disabling influence over the mind and body; where it takes away the energy of the soul, and makes one timid, feeble, helpless, *as if* bound with cords, or made captive. The word אָסַר commonly means to bind with cords, or to fetter; to imprison (Gen. xlii. 24; Judg. xvi. 5; 2 Kings xvii. 4); to yoke (1 Sam. vi. 7, 10); and then to bind with a vow (Num. xxx. 3). Hence it may mean to *bind* with fear or consternation. ¶ *Which have fled from far.* That is, either they have fled far away; or they had fled *from* far in order to reach Jerusalem as a place of safety. Probably the latter is the sense.

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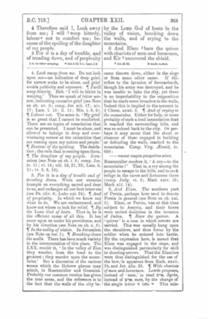

4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will [1] weep bitterly, labour [a] not to comfort me; because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

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.

6 And Elam [b] bare the quiver with chariots of men *and* horsemen, and Kir [2] uncovered the shield.

1 be in bitter weeping. a Jer.4.19; 9.1; Lam.1.2. b Jer.49.35. 2 made naked.

4. *Look away from me.* Do not look upon me—an indication of deep grief, for sorrow seeks to be alone, and grief avoids publicity and exposure. ¶ *I will weep bitterly.* Heb. 'I will be bitter in weeping.' Thus we speak of *bitter* sorrow, indicating excessive grief (see Note on ch. xv. 5; comp. Jer. xiii. 17; xiv. 17; Lam. i. 16; ii. 11; Mic. i. 8, 9). ¶ *Labour not.* The sense is, 'My grief is so great that I cannot be comforted. There are no topics of consolation that can be presented. I must be alone, and allowed to indulge in deep and overwhelming sorrow at the calamities that are coming upon my nation and people.' ¶ *Because of the spoiling.* The desolation; the ruin that is coming upon them. ¶ *The daughter of my people.* Jerusalem (see Note on ch. i. 8; comp. Jer. iv. 11; vi. 14; viii. 19, 21, 22; Lam. ii. 11; iv. 3, 6, 10).

5. *For it is a day of trouble and of treading down.* When our enemies trample on everything sacred and dear to us, and endanger all our best interests (see Ps. xliv. 6; Luke xxi. 24). ¶ *And of perplexity.* In which we know not what to do. We are embarrassed, and know not where to look for relief. ¶ *By the Lord God of hosts.* That is, he is the efficient cause of all this. It has come upon us under his providence, and by his direction (see Note on ch. x. 5). ¶ *In the valley of vision.* In Jerusalem (see Note on ver. 1). ¶ *Breaking down the walls.* There has been much variety in the interpretation of this place. The LXX. render it, 'In the valley of Zion they wander, from the least to the greatest; they wander upon the mountains.' See a discussion of the various senses which the Hebrew phrase may admit, in Rosenmüller and Gesenius. Probably our common version has given the true sense, and the reference is to the fact that the walls of the city became thrown down, either in the siege or from some other cause. If this refers to the invasion of Sennacherib, though his army was destroyed, and he was unable to take the city, yet there is no improbability in the supposition that he made some breaches in the walls. Indeed this is implied in the account in 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ¶ *And of crying to the mountains.* Either for help, or more probably of such a loud lamentation that it reached the surrounding hills, and was re-echoed back to the city. Or perhaps it may mean that the shout or clamour of those engaged in building or defending the walls, reached to the mountains. Comp. Virg. *Æneid*, iv. 668:

—— resonat magnis plangoribus æther.

Rosenmüller renders it, 'A cry—to the mountains!' That is, a cry among the people to escape to the hills, and to seek refuge in the caves and fastnesses there (comp. Judg. vi. 2; Matt. xxiv. 16; Mark xiii. 14).

6. *And Elam.* The southern part of Persia, perhaps here used to denote Persia in general (see Note on ch. xxi. 2). Elam, or Persia, was at this time subject to Assyria, and their forces were united doubtless in the invasion of Judea. ¶ *Bare the quiver.* A 'quiver' is a case in which arrows are carried. This was usually hung upon the shoulders, and thus *borne* by the soldier when he entered into battle. By the expression here, is meant that Elam was engaged in the siege, and was distinguished particularly for skill in shooting arrows. That the Elamites were thus distinguished for the use of the bow, is apparent from Ezek. xxxii. 24, and Jer. xlix. 35. ¶ *With chariots of men and horsemen.* Lowth proposes, instead of 'men,' to read אֲרָם, *Syria*, instead of אָדָם, *man*, by the change of the single letter ד into ר. This mis-

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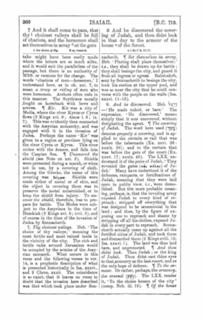

7 And it shall come to pass, *that* thy [1] choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array [2] at the gate.

8 And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house [a] of the forest.

1 the choice of thy. 2 or, toward. a 1 Ki.7.2; 10.17.

take might have been easily made where the letters are so much alike, and it would suit the parallelism of the passage, but there is no authority of MSS. or versions for the change. The words 'chariots of men—horsemen,' I understand here, as in ch. xxi. 7, to mean *a troop* or *riding* of men who were horsemen. Archers often rode in this manner. The Scythians usually *fought* on horseback with bows and arrows. ¶ *Kir.* Kir was a city of Media, where the river Kyrus or Cyrus flows (2 Kings xvi. 9; Amos i. 5; ix. 7). This was evidently then connected with the Assyrian monarchy, and was engaged with it in the invasion of Judea. Perhaps the name 'Kir' was given to a region or province lying on the river Cyrus or Kyrus. This river unites with the Araxes, and falls into the Caspian Sea. ¶ *Uncovered the shield* (see Note on xxi. 5). Shields were protected during a march, or when not in use, by a covering of cloth. Among the Greeks, the name of this covering was Σάγμα. Shields were made either of metal or of skin, and the *object* in covering them was to preserve the metal untarnished, or to keep the shield from injury. To *uncover the shield*, therefore, was to prepare for battle. The Medes were subject to the Assyrians in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings xvi. 9; xvii. 6), and of course in the time of the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib.

7. *Thy choicest valleys.* Heb. 'The *choice* of thy valleys;' meaning the most fertile and most valued lands in the vicinity of the city. The rich and fertile vales around Jerusalem would be occupied by the armies of the Assyrian monarch. What occurs in this verse and the following verses to ver. 14, is a prophetic description of what is presented historically in Isa. xxxvi., and 2 Chron. xxxii. The coincidence is so exact, that it leaves no room to doubt that the invasion here described was that which took place under Sennacherib. ¶ *Set themselves in array.* Heb. 'Placing shall place themselves;' *i.e.*, they shall be drawn up for battle; they shall besiege the city, and guard it from all ingress or egress. Rabshakeh, sent by Sennacherib to besiege the city, took his station at the upper pool, and was so near the city that he could converse with the people on the walls (Isa. xxxvi. 11–13).

8. *And he discovered.* Heb. וַיְגַל —'He made naked, or bare.' The expression, 'He discovered,' means simply that it *was* uncovered, without designating the agent. ¶ *The covering of Judah.* The word here used (מָסָךְ) denotes properly *a covering*, and is applied to the *curtain* or vail that was before the tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 36; xxxix. 38); and to the curtain that was before the gate of the court (Ex. xxxv. 17; xxxix. 40). The LXX. understand it of the *gates* of Judah, 'They revealed the gates (τὰς πύλας) of Judah.' Many have understood it of the defences, ramparts, or fortifications of Judah, meaning that they were laid open to public view, *i.e.*, were demolished. But the more probable meaning, perhaps, is, that the invading army exposed Judah to every kind of reproach; stripped off everything that was designed to be ornamental in the land; and thus, by the figure of exposing one to reproach and shame by stripping off all his clothes, exposed Judah in every part to reproach. Sennacherib actually came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them and dismantled them (2 Kings xviii. 13; Isa. xxxvi. 1). The land was thus laid bare, and unprotected. ¶ *And thou didst look.* Thou Judah; or the king of Judah. Thou didst cast thine eyes to that armoury as the last resort, and as the only hope of defence. ¶ *To the armour.* Or rather, perhaps, the *armoury*, the *arsenal* (נֶשֶׁק). The LXX. render it, 'To the choice houses of the city' (comp. Neh. iii. 19). ¶ *Of the house*

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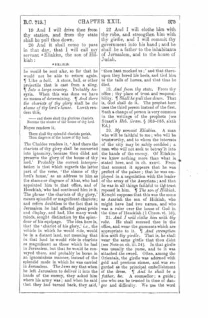

19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant [a]Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah:

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.

a 2 Ki.18.18.

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he would be sent afar, so far that he would not be able to return again. ¶ Like *a ball*. A stone, ball, or other projectile that is cast from a sling. ¶ *Into a large country*. Probably Assyria. When this was done we have no means of determining. ¶ *And there the chariots of thy glory* shall be *the shame of thy lord's house*. Lowth renders this,

—— and there shall thy glorious chariots
Become the shame of the house of thy lord.

Noyes renders it,

There shall thy splendid chariots perish,
Thou disgrace of the house of thy lord.

The Chaldee renders it, 'And there the chariots of thy glory shall be converted into ignominy, because thou didst not preserve the glory of the house of thy lord.' Probably the correct interpretation is that which regards the latter part of the verse, 'the shame of thy lord's house,' as an address to him as the shame or disgrace of Ahaz, who had appointed him to that office, and of Hezekiah, who had continued him in it. The phrase 'the chariots of thy glory,' means splendid or magnificent chariots; and refers doubtless to the fact that in Jerusalem he had affected great pride and display, and had, like many weak minds, sought distinction by the splendour of his equipage. The idea here is, that the 'chariot of his glory,' *i.e.*, the vehicle in which he would ride, would be in a distant land, not meaning that in that land he would ride in chariots as magnificent as those which he had in Jerusalem, but that he would be conveyed there, and probably be borne in an ignominious manner, instead of the splendid mode in which he was carried in Jerusalem. The Jews say that when he left Jerusalem to deliver it into the hands of the enemy, they asked him where his army was; and when he said that they had turned back, they said, 'thou hast mocked us;' and that thereupon they bored his heels, and tied him to the tails of horses, and that thus he died.

19. *And from thy state*. From thy office; thy place of trust and responsibility. ¶ *Shall he pull thee down*. That is, God shall do it. The prophet here uses the third person instead of the first. Such a change of person is very common in the writings of the prophets (see Stuart's *Heb. Gram.* § 563–565, sixth Ed.)

20. *My servant Eliakim*. A man who will be faithful to me; who will be trustworthy, and to whom the interests of the city may be safely confided; a man who will not seek to betray it into the hands of the enemy. Of Eliakim we know nothing more than what is stated here, and in ch. xxxvi. From that account it appears that he was prefect of the palace; that he was employed in a negotiation with the leader of the army of the Assyrians; and that he was in all things faithful to the trust reposed in him. ¶ *The son of Hilkiah*. Kimchi supposes that this was the same as Azariah the son of Hilkiah, who might have had two names, and who was a ruler over the house of God in the time of Hezekiah (1 Chron. vi. 13).

21. *And I will clothe him with thy robe*. He shall succeed thee in the office, and wear the garments which are appropriate to it. ¶ *And strengthen him with thy girdle*. That is, he shall wear the same girdle that thou didst (see Note on ch. iii. 24). In that girdle was usually the purse, and to it was attached the sword. Often, among the Orientals, the girdle was adorned with gold and precious stones, and was regarded as the principal embellishment of the dress. ¶ *And he shall be a father, &c.* A counsellor; a guide; one who can be trusted in time of danger and difficulty. We use the word

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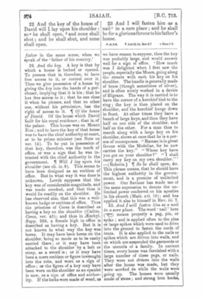

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so[a] he shall open, [b]and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him *as* a nail[c] in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

a ch.9.6. b Job 12.14; Rev.3.7. c Ezra 9.8.

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father in the same sense, when we speak of the 'father of his country.'

22. *And the key*. A key is that by which a house is locked or opened. To possess that is, therefore, to have free access to it, or control over it. Thus we give possession of a house by giving the *key* into the hands of a purchaser, implying that it is his; that he has free access to it; that he can close it when he pleases, and that no other one, without his permission, has the right of access to it. ¶ *Of the house of David*. Of the house which David built for his royal residence; that is, of the palace. This house was on Mount Zion; and to have the key of that house was to have the chief authority at court, or to be prime minister (see Note on ver. 15). To be put in possession of that key, therefore, was the mark of office, or was a sign that he was intrusted with the chief authority in the government. ¶ *Will I lay upon his shoulder* (see ch. ix. 6). This seems to have been designed as an emblem of office. But in what way it was done is unknown. Lowth supposes that the key was of considerable magnitude, and was made crooked, and that thus it would lie readily on the shoulder. He has observed also, that this was a well-known badge or emblem of office. Thus the priestess of Ceres is described as having a key on the shoulder (Callim. *Ceres*, ver. 45); and thus in Æschyl. *Supp.* 299, a female high in office is described as having a key. But it is not known in what way the key was borne. It may have been borne on the shoulder, being so made as to be easily carried there; or it may have been attached to the shoulder by a belt or strap, as a sword is; or it may have been a mere emblem or figure inwrought into the robe, and worn as a sign of office; or the figure of a key may have been worn on the shoulder as an epaulet is now, as a sign of office and authority. If the locks were made of wood, as we have reason to suppose, then the key was probably large, and would answer well for a sign of office. 'How much was I delighted when I first saw the people, especially the Moors, going along the streets with each his key on his shoulder. The handle is generally made of brass (though sometimes of silver), and is often nicely worked in a device of filigrane. The way it is carried is to have the corner of a kerchief tied to the ring; the key is then placed on the shoulder, and the kerchief hangs down in front. At other times they have a bunch of large keys, and then they have half on one side of the shoulder, and half on the other. For a man thus to march along with a large key on his shoulder, shows at once that he is a person of consequence. "Raman is in great favour with the Modeliar, for he now carries the key." "Whose key have you got on your shoulder?" "I shall carry my key on my own shoulder."'—(Roberts.) ¶ *So he shall open, &c.* This phrase means, that he should have the highest authority in the government, and is a promise of unlimited power. Our Saviour has made use of the same expression to denote the unlimited power conferred on his apostles in his church (Matt. xvi. 19); and has applied it also to himself in Rev. iii. 7.

23. *And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place*. The word 'nail' here (יָתֵד) means properly a peg, pin, or spike; and is applied often to the pins or large spikes which were used to drive into the ground to fasten the cords of tents. It is also applied to the nails or spikes which are driven into walls, and on which are suspended the garments or the utensils of a family. In ancient times, every house was furnished with a large number of these pegs, or nails. They were not *driven* into the walls after the house was made, but they were *worked in* while the walls were going up. The houses were usually made of stone; and strong iron hooks,

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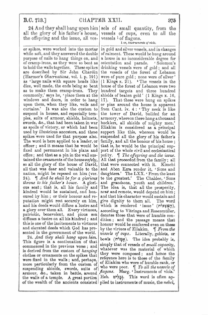

24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels [1]of flagons.

1 or, *instruments of viols*.

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or spikes, were worked into the mortar while soft, and they answered the double purpose of nails to hang things on, and of cramp-irons, as they were so bent as to hold the walls together. These spikes are described by Sir John Chardin (Harmer's *Observations*, vol. i. p. 191) as 'large nails with square heads like dice, well made, the ends being so bent as to make them cramp-irons. They commonly,' says he, 'place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they like, veils and curtains.' It was also the custom to suspend in houses, and especially temples, suits of armour, shields, helmets, swords, &c., that had been taken in war as spoils of victory, or which had been used by illustrious ancestors, and these spikes were used for that purpose also. The word is here applied to a leader, or officer; and it means that he would be fixed and permanent in his plans and office; and that as a pin in the wall sustained the ornaments of the house *safely*, so all the glory of the house of David, all that was dear and valuable to the nation, might be reposed on him (ver. 24). ¶ *And he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house*. A glorious seat; that is, all his family and kindred would be sustained, and honoured by him; or their honour and reputation might rest securely on him, and his deeds would diffuse a lustre and a glory over them all. Every virtuous, patriotic, benevolent, and pious son diffuses a lustre on all his kindred; and this is one of the incitements to virtuous and elevated deeds which God has presented in the government of the world.

24. *And they shall hang upon him*. This figure is a continuation of that commenced in the previous verse; and is derived from the custom of *hanging* clothes or ornaments on the spikes that were fixed in the walls; and, perhaps, more particularly from the custom of suspending shields, swords, suits of armour, &c., taken in battle, around the walls of a temple. A great portion of the wealth of the ancients consisted in gold and silver vessels, and in changes of raiment. These would be hung around a house in no inconsiderable degree for ostentation and parade. 'Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold; and all the vessels of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver' (1 Kings x. 21). 'The vessels in the house of the forest of Lebanon were two hundred targets and three hundred shields of beaten gold' (1 Kings x. 16, 17). That these were hung on spikes or pins around the house is apparent from Cant. iv. 4: 'Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.' Eliakim is considered as a principal support like this, whereon would be suspended all the glory of his father's family, and all the honour of his house; that is, he would be the principal support of the whole civil and ecclesiastical polity. ¶ *The offspring and the issue*. All that proceeded from the family; all that were connected with it. Kimchi and Aben Ezra render it, 'Sons and daughters.' The LXX. 'From the least to the greatest.' The Chaldee, 'Sons and grandsons, youth and children.' The idea is, that all the prosperity, near and remote, would depend on him; and that his character would sustain and give dignity to them all. The word which is rendered 'issue' (הַצְּפִעוֹת), according to Vitringa and Rosenmüller, denotes those that were of humble condition; and the passage means that honour would be conferred even on these by the virtues of Eliakim. ¶ *From the vessels of cups*. Literally, goblets, or bowls (אַגָּנוֹת). The idea probably is, simply that of vessels of *small capacity*, whatever was the material of which they were composed; and hence the reference here is to those of the family of Eliakim who were of humble rank, or who were poor. ¶ *To all the vessels of flagons*. Marg. 'Instruments of viols.' Heb. נְבָלִים. This word is often applied to instruments of music, the *nebel*,

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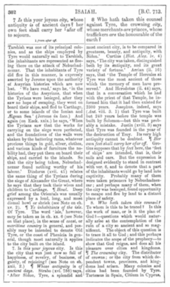

7 *Is* this your joyous *city*, whose antiquity *is* of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her [1]afar off to sojourn.

8 Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city*, whose merchants *are* princes, whose traffickers *are* the honourable of the earth?

[1] from afar off.

Tarshish was one of its principal colonies, and as the ships employed by Tyre would naturally sail to Tarshish, the inhabitants are represented as fleeing there on the attack of Nebuchadnezzar. That the inhabitants of Tyre did flee in this manner, is expressly asserted by Jerome upon the authority of Assyrian histories which are now lost. 'We have read,' says he, 'in the histories of the Assyrians, that when the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw no hope of escaping, they went on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea' (Jerome *in loco.*) And again (on Ezek. xxix.) he says, 'When the Tyrians saw that the works for carrying on the siege were perfected, and the foundations of the walls were shaken by the battering rams, whatever precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture the nobility had, they put them on board their ships, and carried to the islands. So that the city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found nothing worthy of his labour.' Diodorus (xvii. 41) relates the same thing of the Tyrians during the siege of Alexander the Great, where he says that they took their wives and children to Carthage. ¶ *Howl.* Deep grief among the Orientals was usually expressed by a loud, long, and most dismal howl or shriek (see Note on ch. xv. 2). ¶ *Ye inhabitants of the isle.* Of Tyre. The word 'isle,' however, may be taken as in ch. xx. 6 (see Note on that place), in the sense of *coast*, or *maritime country* in general, and possibly may be intended to denote Old Tyre, or the coast of Phenicia in general, though most naturally it applies to the city built on the island.

7. Is *this your joyous* city. Is this the city that was just now so full of happiness, of revelry, of business, of gaiety, of rejoicing? (see Note on ch. xxii. 2.) ¶ *Whose antiquity is of ancient days.* Strabo (xvi. 756) says, 'After Sidon, Tyre, a splendid and most ancient city, is to be compared in greatness, beauty, and antiquity, with Sidon.' Curtius (*Hist. Alex.* iv. 4) says, 'The city was taken, distinguished both by its antiquity, and its great variety of fortune.' Arrian (ii. 16) says, that 'the Temple of Hercules at Tyre was the most ancient of those which the memory of men have preserved.' And Herodotus (ii. 44) says, that in a conversation which he had with the priest of that Temple, he informed him that it had then existed for 2300 years. Josephus, indeed, says (*Ant.* viii. 3. 1) that Tyre was built but 240 years before the temple was built by Solomon—but this was probably a mistake. Justin (xviii. 3) says that Tyre was founded in the year of the destruction of Troy. Its very high antiquity cannot be doubted. ¶ *Her own feet shall carry her afar off.* Grotius supposes that by *feet* here, the 'feet of ships' are intended, that is, their sails and oars. But the expression is designed evidently to stand in contrast with ver. 6, and to denote that a part of the inhabitants would go by land into captivity. Probably many of them were taken prisoners by Nebuchadnezzar; and perhaps many of them, when the city was besieged, found opportunity to escape and flee by land to a distant place of safety.

8. *Who hath taken this counsel?* To whom is this to be traced? Is this the work of man, or is it the plan of God?—questions which would naturally arise at the contemplation of the ruin of a city so ancient and so magnificent. The object of this question is to trace it all to God; and this perhaps indicates the scope of the prophecy—to show that God reigns, and does all his pleasure over cities and kingdoms. ¶ *The crowning city.* The distributer of crowns; or the city from which dependent towns, provinces, and kingdoms had arisen. Many colonies and cities had been founded by Tyre. Tartessus in Spain, Citium in Cyprus,

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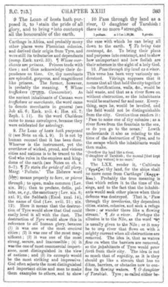

9 The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to [1]stain the pride of all glory, *and* to bring [a]into contempt all the honourable of the earth.

10 Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is* no more [2]strength.

[1] pollute. [a] 1 Cor. 1.26,28. [2] girdle.

Carthage in Africa, and probably many other places were Phenician colonies, and derived their origin from Tyre, and were still its tributaries and dependants (comp. Ezek. xxvii. 33). ¶ *Whose merchants are princes.* Princes trade with thee; and thus acknowledge their dependence on thee. Or, thy merchants are splendid, gorgeous, and magnificent like princes. The former, however, is probably the meaning. ¶ *Whose traffickers* (כִּנְעָנֶיהָ. *Canaanites*). As the ancient inhabitants of Canaan were *traffickers* or *merchants*, the word came to denote merchants in general (see Job xli. 6; Ezek. xvii. 4; Hos. xii. 7; Zeph. i. 11). So the word *Chaldean* came to mean *astrologers*, because they were celebrated for astrology.

9. *The* LORD *of hosts hath purposed it* (see Note on ch. i. 9). It is not by human counsel that it has been done. Whoever is the instrument, yet the overthrow of wicked, proud, and vicious cities and nations is to be traced to the God who rules in the empires and kingdoms of the earth (see Notes on ch. x. 5–7). ¶ *To stain the pride of all glory.* Marg. 'Pollute.' The Hebrew word (חָלַל) means properly *to bore*, or *pierce through*; to open, make common (Lev. xix. 29); then to profane, defile, pollute, as, *e.g.*, the sanctuary (Lev. xix. 8; xxi. 9), the Sabbath (Exod. xxxi. 14), the name of God (Lev. xviii. 21; xix. 12). Here it means that the destruction of Tyre would show that God could easily level it all with the dust. The destruction of *Tyre* would show this in reference to *all* human glory, because (1) it was one of the most *ancient* cities; (2) it was one of the most magnificent; (3) it was one of the most strong, secure, and inaccessible; (4) it was the one of most commercial importance, most distinguished in the view of nations; and (5) its *example* would be the most striking and impressive. God often selects the most distinguished and important cities and men to make them examples to others, and to show the ease with which he can bring all down to the earth. ¶ *To bring into contempt, &c.* To bring their plans and purposes into contempt, and to show how unimportant and how foolish are their schemes in the sight of a holy God.

10. *Pass through thy land as a river.* This verse has been very variously understood. Vitringa supposes that it means that all that held the city together—its fortifications, walls, &c., would be laid waste, and that as a river flows on without obstruction, so the inhabitants would be scattered far and near. Everything, says he, would be levelled, and the field would not be distinguishable from the city. Grotius thus renders it: 'Pass to some one of thy colonies; as a river flows from the fountain to the sea, so do you go to the ocean.' Lowth understands it also as relating to the time of the destruction of Tyre, and to the escape which the inhabitants would then make.

'Overflow thy land like a river,
O daughter of Tarshish; the mound [that kept in thy waters] is no more.'

The LXX. render it, 'Cultivate ('Ἐργάζου) thy land, for the ships shall no more come from Carthage' (Καρχηδόνος). Probably the true meaning is that which refers it to the time of the siege, and to the fact that the inhabitants would seek other places when their defence was destroyed. That is, 'Pass through thy *territories*, thy dependent cities, states, colonies, and seek a refuge there; or wander there like a flowing stream.' ¶ *As a river.* *Perhaps* the allusion is to the Nile, as the word יְאֹר is usually given to the Nile; or it may be to *any* river that flows on with a mighty current when all obstructions are removed. The idea is, that as waters *flow on* when the barriers are removed, so the inhabitants of Tyre would *pour forth* from their city. The idea is not so much that of *rapidity*, as it is they should go like a stream that has no dikes, barriers, or obstacles now to confine its flowing waters. ¶ *O daughter of Tarshish.* Tyre; so called either be-

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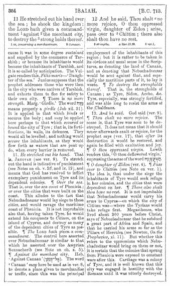

11 He stretched out his hand over the sea; he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment [1]against [2]the merchant *city*, to destroy the [3]strong holds thereof.

12 And he said, Thou shalt [a]no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to [b]Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest.

[1] or, concerning a merchantman. [2] Canaan. [3] strengths. [a] Rev. 18.22. [b] ver. 1.

cause it was in some degree *sustained* and supplied by the commerce of Tarshish; or because its inhabitants would become the inhabitants of Tarshish, and it is so called by anticipation. The Vulgate renders this, *Filia maris*—'Daughter of the sea.' Junius supposes that the prophet addresses those who were then in the city who were natives of Tarshish, and exhorts them to flee for safety to their own city. ¶ There is *no more strength.* Marg. 'Girdle.' The word מֵזַח means properly a *girdle* (Job xii. 21). It is applied to that which *binds* or secures the body; and may be applied here perhaps to that which *secured* or *bound* the city of Tyre; that is, its fortifications, its walls, its defences. They would all be levelled; and nothing would *secure* the inhabitants, as they would flow forth as waters that are pent up do, when every barrier is removed.

11. *He stretched out his hand.* That is, JEHOVAH (see ver. 9). To stretch out the hand is indicative of punishment (see Notes on ch. v. 25, and ix. 12), and means that God has resolved to inflict exemplary punishment on Tyre and its dependent colonies. ¶ *Over the sea.* That is, over the *sea coast* of Phenicia; or over the cities that were built on the coast. This alludes to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar would lay siege to these cities, and would ravage the maritime coast of Phenicia. It is not improbable also that, having taken Tyre, he would extend his conquests to *Citium*, on the island of Cyprus, and destroy as many of the dependent cities of Tyre as possible. ¶ *The* LORD *hath given a commandment.* The control here asserted over Nebuchadnezzar is similar to that which he asserted over the Assyrian Sennacherib (see Note on ch. x. 5). ¶ *Against the merchant* city. Heb. 'Against Canaan' (אֶל־כְּנַעַן). The word 'Canaan' may here be used as in ver. 8, to denote a place given to merchandise or traffic, since this was the principal employment of the inhabitants of this region; but it is rather to be taken in its obvious and usual sense in the Scriptures, as denoting the land of Canaan, and as denoting that Nebuchadnezzar would be sent against that, and especially the maritime parts of it, to lay it waste. ¶ *To destroy the strongholds thereof.* That is, the strongholds of Canaan; as Tyre, Sidon, Accho, &c. Tyre, especially, was strongly fortified, and was able long to resist the arms of the Chaldeans.

12. *And he said.* God said (ver. 9). ¶ *Thou shalt no more rejoice.* The sense is, that Tyre was soon to be destroyed. It does not mean that it should *never* afterwards exult or rejoice, for the prophet says (ver. 17), that *after* its destruction it would be restored, and again be filled with exultation and joy. ¶ *O thou oppressed virgin.* Lowth renders this, 'O thou deflowered virgin,' expressing the sense of the word הַמְעֻשָּׁקָה. ¶ *O daughter of Zidon* (ver. 4). ¶ *Pass over to Chittim* (see Note on ver. 1). The idea is, that under the siege the inhabitants of Tyre would seek refuge in her colonies, and the cities that were dependent on her. ¶ *There also shalt thou have no rest.* It is not improbable that Nebuchadnezzar would carry his arms to Cyprus—on which the city of Citium was—where the Tyrians would take refuge first. Megasthenes, who lived about 300 years before Christ, says of Nebuchadnezzar that he subdued a great part of Africa and Spain, and that he carried his arms so far as the Pillars of Hercules (see Newton, *On the Prophecies*, xi. 11). But whether this refers to the oppressions which Nebuchadnezzar would bring on them or not, it is certain that the colonies that sprung from Phenicia were exposed to constant wars after this. Carthage was a colony of Tyre, and it is well known that this city was engaged in hostility with the Romans until it was utterly destroyed.

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13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not *till* the Assyrian founded it for them [a] that

a Ps.72.9.

Indeed all the dependent colonies of ancient Tyre became interested and involved in the agitations and commotions which were connected with the conquests of the Roman empire.

13. *Behold the land of the Chaldeans.* This is a very important verse, as it expresses the source whence these calamities were coming upon Tyre; and as it states some historical facts of great interest respecting the *rise* of Babylon. In the previous verses the prophet had foretold the certain destruction of Tyre, and had said that whoever was the agent, it was to be traced to the overruling providence of God. He here states distinctly that the agent in accomplishing all this would be the Chaldeans—a statement which fixes the time to the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and proves that it does not refer to the conquest by Alexander the Great. A part of this verse should be read as a parenthesis, and its general sense has been well expressed by Lowth, who has followed Vitringa:—

> 'Behold the land of the Chaldeans;
> This people was of no account;—
> (The Assyrian founded it for the inhabitants of the desert;
> They raised the watch towers, they set up the palaces thereof;)
> This people hath reduced her to a ruin.'

¶ *Behold.* Indicating that what he was about to say was something unusual, remarkable, and not to be expected in the ordinary course of events. That which was so remarkable was the fact that a people formerly so little known, would rise to such power as to be able to overturn the ancient and mighty city of Tyre. ¶ *The land of the Chaldeans.* Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Chaldea or Babylonia. The names Babylon and Chaldea are often interchanged as denoting the same kingdom and people (see ch. xlviii. 14, 20; Jer. l. 1; li. 24; Ezek. xii. 13). The sense is, 'Lo! the power of Chaldea shall be employed in your overthrow.' ¶ *This people.* The people of Babylonia or Chaldea. ¶ *Was not.* Was not known; had no government or power; was a rude, nomadic, barbarous, feeble, and illiterate people. The same phrase occurs in Deut. xxxii. 21, where it also means a people unknown, rude, barbarous, wandering. That this was formerly the character of the Chaldeans is apparent from Job i. 17, where they are described as a nomadic race, having no established place of abode, and living by plunder. ¶ Till *the Assyrian.* Babylon was probably founded by Nimrod (see Notes on ch. xiii.), but it was long before it rose to splendour. Belus or Bel, the Assyrian, is said to have reigned at Babylon A.M. 2682, or 1322 B.C., in the time of Shamgar, judge of Israel. He was succeeded by Ninus and Semiramis, who gave the principal celebrity and splendour to the city and kingdom, and who may be said to have been its founders. They are probably referred to here. ¶ *Founded it.* Semiramis reclaimed it from the waste of waters; built dikes to confine the Euphrates in the proper channel; and made it the capital of the kingdom. This is the account given by Herodotus (*Hist.* i.):—'She (Semiramis) built mounds worthy of admiration, where before the river was accustomed to spread like a sea through the whole plain.' ¶ *For them that dwell in the wilderness.* Heb. צִיִּים—'For the tsiim.' This word (from צִי or צִיָּה, *a waste* or *desert*) denotes properly the inhabitants of the desert or waste places, and is applied to men in Ps. lxxii. 9; lxxiv. 14; and to animals in Isa. xiii. 21 (Notes); xxxiv. 14. Here it denotes, I suppose, those who had been formerly inhabitants of the deserts around Babylon—the wandering, rude, uncultivated, and predatory people, such as the Chaldeans were (Job i. 17); and means that the Assyrian who founded Babylon collected this rude and predatory people, and made use of them in building the city. The same account Arrian gives respecting Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who says, that 'Philip found them wandering and unsettled (πλανήτας καὶ ἀπόρους), feeding small flocks of sheep upon the mountains, that he gave them coats of mail instead of their shepherd's dress, and led them from the mountain to the plain, and gave them cities to dwell in, and established them with good

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dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof; *and* he brought it to ruin.

14 Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your strength is laid waste.

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 [1] shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been

1 it shall be unto Tyre as the song of.

and wholesome laws.'—(*Hist. Alex.* vii.) ¶ *They set up the towers thereof.* That is, the towers in Babylon, not in Tyre (see Notes on ch. xiii.) Herodotus expressly says that the Assyrians built the towers and temples of Babylon (i. 84). ¶ And *he brought it to ruin.* That is, the Babylonian or Chaldean brought Tyre to ruin; to wit, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of a people formerly unknown and rude, would be employed to destroy the ancient and magnificent city of Tyre.

14. *Howl,* &c. (ver. 1). ¶ *For your strength.* That which has been your support and strength; to wit, Tyre (comp. Ezek. xxvi. 15–18).

15. *Tyre shall be forgotten.* Shall cease to be a place of importance in commerce; shall be unheard of in those distant places to which ships formerly sailed. ¶ *Seventy years, according to the days of one king.* 'That is, of one kingdom (see Dan. vii. 17; viii. 20).'—(Lowth.) The word 'king' may denote dynasty, or kingdom. The duration of the Babylonian monarchy was properly but seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar began his conquest in the first year of his reign, and from thence to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus was seventy years. And at that time the nations that had been conquered and subdued by the Babylonians would be restored to liberty. Tyre was, indeed, taken towards the middle of that period, and its subjugation referred to here was only for the remaining part of it. 'All these nations,' says Jeremiah (xxv. 11), 'shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.' Some of them were conquered sooner, and some later; but the end of this period was the common time of deliverance to them all. So Lowth, Newton, Vitringa, Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller, and others, understand this. That 'the days of one king' may denote here kingdom or dynasty, and be applied to the duration of the kingdom of Babylon, is apparent from two considerations, viz. (1.) The word 'king' must be so understood in several places in the Scriptures; Dan. vii. 17: 'These great beasts which are four, are four great *kings* which shall arise out of the earth,' that is, dynasties, or *succession* of kings (Dan. viii. 20; so Rev. xvii. 12). (2.) The expression is peculiarly applicable to the Babylonian monarchy, because, during the entire seventy years which that kingdom lasted, it was under the dominion of one family or dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar founded the Babylonian empire, or raised it to so great splendour, that he was regarded as its founder, and was succeeded in the kingdom by his son Evil-Merodach, and his grandson Belshazzar, in whose reign the kingdom terminated; comp. *Jer.* xxvii. 7: 'And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son.' The period of seventy years is several times mentioned, as a period during which the nations that were subject to Babylon would be oppressed, and *after* that they should be set at liberty (see Jer. xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 10; comp. Jer. xlvi. 26). ¶ *Shall Tyre sing as an harlot.* Marg. as the Hebrew, 'It shall be unto Tyre as the song of an harlot.' That is, Tyre shall be restored to its former state of prosperity and opulence; it shall be adorned with the rich productions of other climes, and shall be gay and joyful again. There are two ideas here; one that Tyre would be again prosperous, and the other that she would sustain substantially the same character as before. It was common to compare cities with females, whether virtuous or otherwise (see Note on ch. i. 8). The same figure which is here used occurs in Rev. xvii. 3–19 (comp. Isa. xlvii. 1; Nah. iii. 4; Rev. xviii. 3, 9).

16. *Take an harp.* This is a continuation of the figure commenced in the previous verse, a direct command to

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forgotten: make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

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 [a] shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

18 And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness [b] 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 [1] durable clothing.

a Rev.17.2. b Zec.14.20,21. 1 old.

Tyre as an harlot, to go about the city with the usual expressions of rejoicing. Thus Donatus, in *Terent. Eunuch.*, iii. 2, 4, says:—

> 'Felicitam esse meretricum est;'

And thus Horace:—

> 'Nec meretrix tibicina, cujus
> Ad strepitum salias.' 1 *Epis.* xiv. 25.

¶ *Thou harlot that hast been forgotten.* For seventy years thou hast lain unknown, desolate, ruined. ¶ *Make sweet melody,* &c. Still the prophet keeps up the idea of the harlot that had been forgotten, and that would now call her lovers again to her dwelling. The sense is, that Tyre would rise to her former splendour, and that the nations would be attracted by the proofs of returning prosperity to renew their commercial intercourse with her.

17. *The* LORD *will visit Tyre.* He will restore her to her former wealth and magnificence. ¶ *And she shall turn to her hire.* The word 'hire' here denotes the wages or reward that is given to an harlot; and the idea which was commenced in the previous verses is here continued—of Tyre as an harlot—gay, splendid, licentious, and holding intercourse with strangers and foreigners. The *gains* of that commerce with other nations are here represented as her *hire.* ¶ *And shall commit fornication,* &c. Shall again be the mart of commerce (ver. 3); shall have intercourse with all the nations, and derive her support, splendour, luxury, from all. The idea is, that she would be restored to her former commercial importance, and perhaps, also, the prophet intends to intimate that she would procure those gains by dishonest acts, and by fraudulent pretexts. After the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, it remained desolate until the close of the Babylonian monarchy. Then a new city was built on the island, that soon rivalled the former in magnificence. That new city was besieged and taken by Alexander the Great, on his way to the conquests of the East.

18. *And her merchandise.* The prophecy here does not mean that this would take place *immediately after* her rebuilding, but that *subsequent* to the seventy years of desolation this would occur. ¶ *Shall be holiness to the* LORD. This undoubtedly means, that at some future period, after the rebuilding of Tyre, the true religion would prevail there, and her wealth would be devoted to his service. That the true religion prevailed at Tyre subsequently to its restoration and rebuilding there can be no doubt. The Christian religion was early established at Tyre. It was visited by the Saviour (Matt. xv. 21), and by Paul. Paul found several disciples of Christ there when on his way to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 3–6). It suffered much, says Lowth, under the Diocletian persecution. Eusebius (*Hist.* x. 4.) says that 'when the church of God was founded in Tyre, and in other places, much of its wealth was consecrated to God, and was brought as an offering to the church, and was presented for the support of the ministry agreeable to the commandments of the Lord.' Jerome says, 'We have seen churches built to the Lord in Tyre; we have beheld the wealth of all, which was not treasured up nor hid, but which was given to those who dwelt before the Lord.' It early became a Christian bishopric; and in the fourth century of the Christian era, Jerome (*Comm.* in Ezek. xxvi. 7; xxvii. 2) speaks of Tyre as the most noble and beautiful city of Phenicia, and as still trading with all the world. Reland enumerates the following list of bishops as having been present from Tyre at

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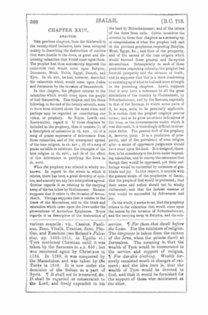

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANALYSIS.

THE previous chapters, from the thirteenth to the twenty-third inclusive, have been occupied mainly in describing the destruction of nations that were hostile to the Jews, or great and distressing calamities that would come upon them. The prophet had thus successively depicted the calamities that would come upon Babylon, Damascus, Moab, Nubia, Egypt, Dumah, and Tyre. In ch. xxii., he had, however, described the calamities which would come upon Judea and Jerusalem by the invasion of Sennacherib.

In this chapter, the prophet returns to the calamities which would come upon the people of God themselves. This chapter, and the three following, to the end of the twenty-seventh, seem to have been uttered about the same time, and perhaps may be regarded as constituting one vision, or prophecy. So Noyes, Lowth, and Rosenmuller, regard it. If these chapters be included in the prophecy, then it consists (1) of a description of *calamities* in ch. xxiv., (2) of a song of praise expressive of deliverance from those calamities, and of the consequent spread of the true religion, in ch. xxv.; (3) of a song of praise suitable to celebrate the triumphs of the true religion in ch. xxvi.; and (4) of the effect of this deliverance in purifying the Jews in ch. xxvii.

When the prophecy was uttered is wholly unknown. In regard to the *events* to which it relates, there has been a great diversity of opinion, and scarcely are any two interpreters agreed. Grotius regards it as relating to the carrying away of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. Hensler supposes that it refers to the invasion of Sennacherib. Vitringa supposes that it relates to the times of the Maccabees, and to the trials and calamities which came upon the Jews under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Noyes regards it as descriptive of the destruction of the land by Nebuchadnezzar, and of the return of the Jews from exile. Calvin considers the account in these four chapters as a *summing up*, or *recapitulation* of what the prophet had said in the previous prophecies respecting Babylon, Moab, Egypt, &c.; and then of the prosperity, and of the spread of the true religion which would succeed these general and far-spread devastations. Subsequently to *each* of these predictions respecting calamity, the prophet had foretold prosperity and the advance of truth; and he supposes that this is a mere condensing or summing up of what he had said more at length in the preceding chapters. Lowth supposes that it may have a reference to *all* the great desolations of the country by Shalmaneser, by Nebuchadnezzar, and by the Romans, especially to that of the Romans, to which some parts of it, he says, seem to be peculiarly applicable. It is certain that the prophet employs *general* terms; and as he gives no *certain* indications of the time, or the circumstances under which it was delivered, it is exceedingly difficult to determine either. The *general* drift of the prophecy is, however, plain. It is a prediction of prosperity, and of the prevalence of true religion *after* a series of oppressive judgments should have come upon the land. It is designed, therefore, to be *consolatory* to the Jews under impending calamities, and to convey the assurance that though they would be oppressed, yet their sufferings would be succeeded by occasions of gratitude and joy. In this respect, it accords with the general strain of the prophecies of Isaiah, that the people of God would be protected; that their name and nation should not be wholly obliterated; and that the darkest seasons of trial would be succeeded by deliverance and joy.

On the whole, it seems to me, that the prophecy relates to the calamities that would come upon the nation by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, and the carrying away to Babylon, and the sub-

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various councils; viz., Cassius, Paulinus, Zeno, Vitalis, Uranius, Zeno, Photius, and Eusebius (see Reland's *Palestine*, pp. 1002–1011, in Ugolin vi.) Tyre continued Christian until it was taken by the Saracens in A.D. 639; but was recovered again by Christians in 1124. In 1280, it was conquered by the Mamelukes, and was taken by the Turks in 1516. It is now under the dominion of the Sultan as a part of Syria. ¶ *It shall not be treasured, &c.* It shall be regarded as consecrated to the Lord, and freely expended in his service. ¶ *For them that dwell before the* LORD. For the ministers of religion. The *language* is taken from the custom of the Jews, when the priests *dwelt* at Jerusalem. The meaning is, that the wealth of Tyre would be consecrated to the service and support of religion. ¶ *For durable clothing.* Wealth formerly consisted much in changes of raiment; and the idea here is, that the wealth of Tyre would be devoted to God, and that it would be furnished for the support of those who ministered at the altar.

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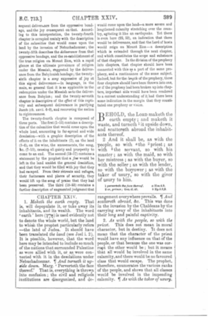

sequent deliverance from the oppressive bondage, and the joy consequent on that. According to this interpretation, the twenty-fourth chapter is occupied mainly with the description of the *calamities* that would come upon the land by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar; the twenty-fifth describes the *deliverance* from that oppressive bondage, and the re-establishment of the true religion on Mount Zion, with a rapid glance at the ultimate prevalence of religion under the Messiah, suggested by the deliverance from the Babylonish bondage; the twenty-sixth chapter is a *song* expressive of joy at this signal deliverance—in language, in the main, so general that it is as applicable to the redemption under the Messiah as to the deliverance from Babylon; and the twenty-seventh chapter is descriptive of the *effect* of this captivity and subsequent deliverance in purifying Jacob (ch. xxvii. 6–9), and recovering the nation to righteousness.

The twenty-fourth chapter is composed of three parts. The first (1–12) contains a description of the calamities that would come upon the whole land, amounting to far-spread and wide desolation—with a graphic description of the effects of it on the inhabitants (2), on the land (3–6), on the wine, the amusements, the song, &c. (7–12), causing all gaiety and prosperity to come to an end. The second (13–17) contains a statement by the prophet that a *few* would be left in the land amidst the general desolation, and that they would be filled with joy that they had escaped. From their retreats and refuges, their fastnesses and places of security, they would lift up the song of praise that they had been preserved. The third (18–23) contains a further description of augmented judgment that would come upon the land—a more severe and lengthened calamity stretching over the country, agitating it like an earthquake. Yet there is even here (22, 23), an indication that there would be deliverance, and that the Lord of hosts would reign on Mount Zion—a description which is extended through the next chapter, and which constitutes the scope and substance of that chapter. In the division of the prophecy into chapters, that chapter should have been connected with this as a part of the same prophecy, and a continuance of the same subject. Indeed, but for the *length* of the prophecy, these four chapters should have been thrown into one, or if the prophecy had been broken up into chapters, important aids would have been rendered to a correct understanding of it had there been some indication in the margin that they constituted one prophecy or vision.

BEHOLD, the LORD maketh the earth empty; and maketh it waste, and turneth [1] it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with [a] the [2] priest; as with [b] 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.

[1] *perverteth the face thereof.*

[2] or, *prince*; Gen. 41.45.

[a] Hos. 4.9.

[b] Ep. 6.8,9.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. *Maketh the earth empty.* That is, will depopulate it, or take away its inhabitants, and its wealth. The word 'earth' here (אֶרֶץ) is used evidently not to denote the whole world, but the land to which the prophet particularly refers—the land of Judea. It should have been translated *the land* (see Joel i. 2). It is possible, however, that the word here may be intended to include so much of the nations that surrounded Palestine as were allied with it, or as were connected with it in the desolations under Nebuchadnezzar. ¶ *And turneth it upside down.* Marg. 'Perverteth the face thereof.' That is, everything is thrown into confusion; the civil and religious institutions are disorganized, and derangement everywhere prevails. ¶ *And scattereth abroad, &c.* This was done in the invasion by the Chaldeans by the carrying away of the inhabitants into their long and painful captivity.

2. *As with the people, so with the priest.* This does not mean in moral character, but in destiny. It does not mean that the character of the priest would have any influence on that of the people, or that because the one was corrupt the other would be; but it means that all would be involved in the same calamity, and there would be no favoured class that would escape. The prophet, therefore, enumerates the various ranks of the people, and shows that all classes would be involved in the impending calamity. ¶ *As with the taker of usury.*

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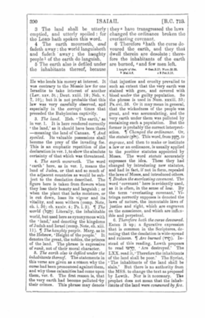

3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

4 The earth mourneth, *and* fadeth away: the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people [1] of the earth do languish.

5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they [a] have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore [b] hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, [c] and few men left.

[1] *height of the.*

[a] Gen. 3.17; Num. 35.33.

[b] Mal. 4.6.

[c] 2 Pet. 3.10.

He who lends his money at interest. It was contrary to the Mosaic law for one Israelite to take interest of another (Lev. xxv. 36; Deut. xxiii. 19; Neh. v. 7, 10); but it is not probable that this law was very carefully observed, and especially in the corrupt times that preceded the Babylonian captivity.

3. *The land.* Heb. 'The earth,' as in ver. 1. It is here rendered correctly 'the land,' as it should have been there—meaning the land of Canaan. ¶ *And spoiled.* Its valuable possessions shall become the prey of the invading foe. This is an emphatic repetition of the declaration in ver. 1, to show the absolute certainty of that which was threatened.

4. *The earth mourneth.* The word 'earth' here, as in ver. 1, means the land of Judea, or that and so much of the adjacent countries as would be subject to the desolation described. The figure here is taken from flowers when they lose their beauty and languish; or when the plant that lacks moisture, or is cut down, loses its vigour and its vitality, and soon withers (comp. Note, ch. i. 30; ch. xxxiv. 4; Ps. i. 3). ¶ *The world* (תֵּבֵל) Literally, the inhabitable world, but used here as synonymous with the 'land,' and denoting the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (comp. Note, ch. xiii. 11). ¶ *The haughty people.* Marg. as in the Hebrew, 'Height of the people.' It denotes the great, the nobles, the princes of the land. The phrase is expressive of *rank*, not of their moral character.

5. *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.* The statements in this verse are given as a reason why the curse had been pronounced against them, and why these calamities had come upon them, ver. 6. The first reason is, that the very earth had become polluted by their crimes. This phrase may denote that injustice and cruelty prevailed to such an extent that the very earth was stained with gore, and covered with blood *under* the guilty population. So the phrase is used in Num. xxxiii. 33; Ps. cvi. 38. Or it may mean in general, that the wickedness of the people was great, and was accumulating, and the very earth under them was polluted by sustaining such a population. But the former is probably the correct interpretation. ¶ *Changed the ordinance.* Or, the *statute* (חֹק). This word, from חָקַק, *to engrave*, and then to make or institute a law or an ordinance, is usually applied to the *positive* statutes appointed by Moses. The word *statute* accurately expresses the idea. These they had changed by introducing new statutes, and had in fact, if not in form, repealed the laws of Moses, and introduced others. ¶ *Broken the everlasting covenant.* The word 'covenant' here is evidently used, as it is often, in the sense of *law*. By the term 'everlasting covenant,' Vitringa correctly supposes is denoted the laws of nature, the immutable laws of justice and right, which are engraven on the conscience, and which are inflexible and perpetual.

6. *Therefore hath the curse devoured.* Eaten it up; a figurative expression that is common in the Scriptures, denoting that the desolation is wide-spread and ruinous. ¶ *Are burned* (חָרוּ). Instead of this reading, Lowth proposes to read חָרְבוּ, 'Are destroyed.' The LXX. read it, 'Therefore the inhabitants of the land shall be poor.' The Syriac, 'The inhabitants of the land shall be slain.' But there is no authority from the MSS. to change the text as proposed by Lowth. Nor is it necessary. The prophet does not mean that the inhabitants of the land were *consumed by fire*.

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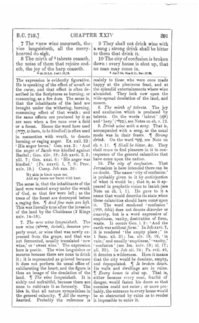

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7 The [a] new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh.

8 The mirth of [b] tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

10 The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

[a] ch.16.8,9; Joel 1.10,12. [b] Jer.7.34; Hos.2.11; Rev.18.22.

The expression is evidently figurative. He is speaking of the effect of *wrath* or the *curse*, and that effect is often described in the Scriptures as burning, or consuming, as a fire does. The sense is, that the inhabitants of the land are brought under the withering, burning, consuming effect of that wrath; and the same effects are produced by it as are seen when a fire runs over a field or a forest. Hence the word here used (חָרָה, *to burn, to be kindled*) is often used in connection with wrath, to denote burning or raging anger. Ex. xxii. 23: 'His anger burns.' Gen. xxx. 2: 'And the anger of Jacob was kindled against Rachel; Gen. xliv. 18; Job xxvii. 2, 3; xlii. 7; Gen. xxxi. 6: 'His anger was kindled.' (Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7, 8; Prov. xxiv. 19.) Comp. Job xxx. 30:

My skin is black upon me,
And my bones are burnt with heat.

The sense is, that the inhabitants of the land were wasted away under the wrath of God, so that few were left; as the trees of the forest are destroyed before a raging fire. ¶ *And few men are left.* This was literally true after the invasion of the land by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv. 14–16).

7. *The new wine languisheth.* The new wine (תִּירוֹשׁ, *tirôsh*), denotes properly *must*, or wine that was newly expressed from the grape, and that was not fermented, usually translated 'new wine,' or 'sweet wine.' The expression here is poetic. The wine languishes or mourns because there are none to drink it; it is represented as grieved because it does not perform its usual office of exhilarating the heart, and the figure is thus an image of the desolation of the land. ¶ *The wine languisheth.* It is sickly and unfruitful, because there are none to cultivate it as formerly. The idea is, that all nature sympathises in the general calamity. ¶ *All the merry-hearted.* Probably the reference is mainly to those who were once made happy at the plenteous feast, and at the splendid entertainments where wine abounded. They look now upon the wide-spread desolation of the land, and mourn.

8. *The mirth of tabrets.* The joy and exultation which is produced by tabrets. On the words 'tabret' (תֹּף) and 'harp' (כִּנּוֹר), see Notes on ch. v. 12.

9. *Drink wine with a song.* That is, accompanied with a song, as the usual mode was in their feasts. ¶ *Strong drink.* On the word שֵׁכָר, see Note on ch. v. 11. ¶ *Shall be bitter, &c.* They shall cease to find pleasure in it in consequence of the general calamities that have come upon the nation.

10. *The city of confusion.* That Jerusalem is here intended there can be no doubt. The name 'city of confusion,' is probably given to it by *anticipation* of what it would be; that is, as it appeared in prophetic vision to Isaiah (see Note on ch. i. 1). He gave to it a name that would describe its state when these calamities should have come upon it. The word rendered 'confusion' (תֹּהוּ, *tōhû*) does not denote *disorder* or *anarchy*, but is a word expressive of emptiness, vanity, destitution of form, waste. It occurs Gen. i. 2: 'And the earth was *without form*.' In Job xxvi. 7, it is rendered 'the empty place;' in 1 Sam. xii. 21; Isa. xlv. 18, 19, 'in vain;' and usually 'emptiness,' 'vanity,' 'confusion' (see Isa. xxiv. 10; xl. 17; xli. 29). In Job xii. 24; Ps. cvii. 40, it denotes a wilderness. Here it means that the city would be desolate, empty, and depopulated. ¶ *Is broken down.* Its walls and dwellings are in ruins. ¶ *Every house is shut up.* That is, either because every man, fearful of danger, would fasten his doors so that enemies could not enter; or more probably, the entrance to every house would be so obstructed by ruins as to render it impossible to enter it.

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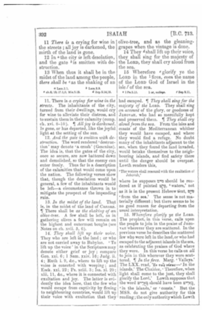

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11 *There is* a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

12 In [a] the city *is* left desolation, and the gate [b] is smitten with destruction.

13 When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, *there shall be* [c] as the shaking of an olive-tree, and as the gleaning-grapes when the vintage is done.

14 They [d] shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

15 Wherefore [e] glorify ye the LORD in the [1] fires, *even* the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isle [f] of the sea.

[a] Lam.1.1. [b] Lam.2.9. [c] ch.6.13; 17.5,6; Mic.7.1. [d] Zep.3.14,15. [e] 1 Pe.2.12. [1] or, valleys. [f] Zep.2.11.

11. There is *a crying for wine in the streets.* The inhabitants of the city, turned from their dwellings, would cry for wine to alleviate their distress, and to sustain them in their calamity (comp. ch. xvi. 8–10). ¶ *All joy is darkened.* Is gone, or has departed, like the joyful light at the setting of the sun.

12. *And the gate is smitten with destruction.* The word rendered 'destruction' may denote 'a crash' (Gesenius). The idea is, that the gates of the city, once so secure, are now battered down and demolished, so that the enemy can enter freely. Thus far is a description of the calamities that would come upon the nation. The following verses show that, though the desolation would be general, a few of the inhabitants would be left—a circumstance thrown in to mitigate the prospect of the impending ruin.

13. *In the midst of the land.* That is, in the midst of the land of Canaan. ¶ There shall be *as the shaking of an olive-tree.* A few shall be left, as in gathering olives a few will remain on the highest and outermost boughs (see Notes on ch. xvii. 5, 6).

14. *They shall lift up their voice.* They who are left in the land; or who are not carried away to Babylon. 'To lift up the voice' in the Scriptures may denote either grief or joy; compare Gen. xxi. 6; 1 Sam. xxiv. 16; Judg. ii. 4; Ruth i. 9, &c., where to lift up the voice is conected with weeping; and Ezek. xxi. 22; Ps. xciii. 3; Isa. xl. 29; xlii. 11, &c., where it is connected with exultation and joy. The latter is evidently the idea here, that the few who would escape from captivity by fleeing to neighbouring countries, would lift up their voice with exultation that they had escaped. ¶ *They shall sing for the majesty of the* LORD. They shall sing *on account of* the glory, or goodness of JEHOVAH, who had so mercifully kept and preserved them. ¶ *They shall cry aloud from the sea.* From the isles and coasts of the Mediterranean whither they would have escaped, and where they would find a refuge. No doubt many of the inhabitants adjacent to the sea, when they found the land invaded, would betake themselves to the neighbouring islands, and find safety there until the danger should be overpast. Lowth renders this,

'The waters shall resound with the exultation of Jehovah,'

where he supposes מִיָּם should be rendered as if pointed מַיִם, 'waters,' not as it is in the present Hebrew text, מִיָּם 'from the sea.' The sense is not materially different; but there seems to be no good reason for departing from the usual interpretation.

15. *Wherefore glorify ye the* LORD. The prophet, in this verse, calls upon the people to join in the praise of JEHOVAH wherever they are scattered. In the previous verse he describes the scattered few who were left in the land, or who had escaped to the adjacent islands in the sea, as celebrating the praises of God where they were. In this verse he calls on all to join in this wherever they were scattered. ¶ *In the fires.* Marg. 'Valleys.' The LXX. read, 'Ἐν ταῖς νήσοις—' In the islands.' The Chaldee, 'Therefore, when light shall come to the just, they shall glorify the Lord.' Lowth supposes that the word בָּאֻרִים should have been בְּאִיִּים, 'in the islands,' or 'coasts.' But the MSS. do not give authority for this reading; the only authority which Lowth

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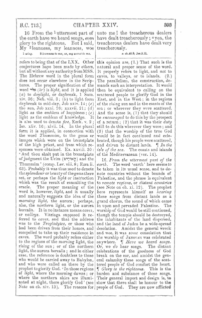

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16 From the [1] uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous. But I said, My [2] leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; [a] yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

[1] wing. [2] leanness to me, or, my secret to me. [a] ch.48.8; Jer.5.11.

refers to being that of the LXX. Other conjectures have been made by others, but all without any authority from MSS. The Hebrew word in the plural form does not occur elsewhere in the Scriptures. The proper signification of the word אוּר (*ûr*) is *light*, and it is applied (*a*) to *daylight*, or daybreak, 1 Sam. xiv. 36; Neh. viii. 3; (*b*) to light from daybreak to mid-day, Job xxiv. 14; (*c*) the sun, Job xxxi. 26; xxxvii. 21; (*d*) light as the emblem of happiness; (*e*) light as the emblem of knowledge. It is also used to denote *fire*, Ezek. v. 2; Isa. xliv. 16; xlvii. 14. In the plural form it is applied, in connection with the word *Thummim*, to the gems or images which were on the breastplate of the high priest, and from which responses were obtained. Ex. xxviii. 30: 'And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim (הָאוּרִים) and the Thummim' (comp. Lev. viii. 8; Ezra ii. 63). Probably it was thus used to denote the *splendour* or beauty of the gems there set, or perhaps the *light* or instruction which was the result of consulting the oracle. The proper meaning of the word is, however, *light*, and it usually and naturally suggests the idea of the *morning light*, the aurora; perhaps, also, the *northern* light, or the aurora borealis. It in no instance means *caves*, or *valleys*. Vitringa supposed it referred to *caves*, and that the address was to the *Troglodytes*, or those who had been driven from their homes, and compelled to take up their residence in caves. The word probably refers either to the regions of the morning light, the rising of the sun; or of the northern light, the aurora borealis; and in either case, the reference is doubtless to those who would be carried away to Babylon, and who were called on there by the prophet to glorify God. 'In those regions of *light*, where the morning dawns; or where the northern skies are illuminated at night, there glorify God' (see Note on ch. xiv. 13). The reasons for this opinion are, (1.) That such is the natural and proper sense of the word. It properly refers to light, and not to caves, to valleys, or to islands. (2.) The parallelism, the construction, demands such an interpretation. It would then be equivalent to calling on the scattered people to glorify God in the East, and in the West; in the regions of the rising sun and in the coasts of the sea; or wherever they were scattered. And the sense is, (1) that they should be *encouraged* to do this by the prospect of a return; (2) that it was their *duty* still to do this wherever they were; and (3) that the worship of the true God would be in fact continued and celebrated, though his people were scattered, and driven to distant lands. ¶ *In the isle of the sea.* The coasts and islands of the Mediterranean (ver. 14).

16. *From the uttermost part of the earth.* The word 'earth' here seems to be taken in its usual sense, and to denote countries without the bounds of Palestine, and the phrase is equivalent to *remote regions*, or *distant countries* (see Note on ch. xi. 12). The prophet here represents himself as *hearing* those songs from distant lands as a grand chorus, the sound of which came in upon and pervaded Palestine. The worship of God would be still continued, though the temple should be destroyed, the inhabitants of the land dispersed, and the land of Judea be a wide-spread desolation. Amidst the general wreck and woe, it was *some* consolation that the worship of JEHOVAH was celebrated anywhere. ¶ *Have we heard songs.* Or, we *do* hear songs. The distant celebrations of the goodness of God break on the ear, and amidst the general calamity these songs of the scattered people of God comfort the heart. ¶ *Glory to the righteous.* This is the burden and substance of those songs. Their general import and design is, to show that there shall be honour to the people of God. They are now afflicted

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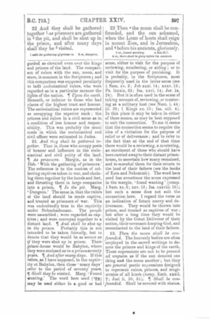

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22 And they shall be gathered together [1] *as* prisoners are gathered in [2] the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be [3] visited.

23 Then [a] the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and [4] before his ancients, gloriously.

[1] with the gathering of prisoners. [2] or, dungeon.

[3] or, found wanting. [a] Eze.32.7.

[4] or, there shall be glory before his ancients

garded as elevated even over the kings and princes of the land. The comparison of rulers with the sun, moon, and stars, is common in the Scriptures; and this comparison was supposed peculiarly to befit *ecclesiastical* rulers, who were regarded as in a particular manner the lights of the nation. ¶ *Upon the earth.* Beneath, or inferior to those who had places of the highest trust and honour. The ecclesiastical rulers are represented as occupying the superior rank; the princes and rulers in a civil sense as in a condition of less honour and responsibility. This was probably the usual mode in which the ecclesiastical and civil offices were estimated in Judea.

22. *And they shall be gathered together.* That is, those who occupy posts of honour and influence in the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the land. ¶ *As prisoners.* Margin, as in the Heb. 'With the gathering of prisoners.' The reference is to the custom of collecting captives taken in war, and chaining them together by the hands and feet, and thrusting them in large companies into a prison. ¶ *In the pit.* Marg. 'Dungeon.' The sense is, that the rulers of the land should be made captive, and treated as prisoners of war. This was undoubtedly true in the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. The people were assembled; were regarded as captives; and were conveyed together to a distant land. ¶ *And shall be shut up in the prison.* Probably this is not intended to be taken *literally*, but to denote that they would be as secure *as if* they were shut up in prison. Their prison-house would be Babylon, where they were enclosed *as in a prison* seventy years. ¶ *And after many days.* If this refers, as I have supposed, to the captivity at Babylon, then these 'many days' refer to the period of seventy years. ¶ *Shall they be visited.* Marg. 'Found wanting.' The word here used (פָּקַד) may be used either in a good or bad sense, either to visit for the purpose of reviewing, numbering, or aiding; or to visit for the purpose of punishing. It is probably, in the Scriptures, most frequently used in the latter sense (see 1 Sam. xv. 2; Job xxxi. 14; xxxv. 15; Ps. lxxxix. 33; Isa. xxvi. 14; Jer. ix. 24). But it is often used in the sense of taking account of, reviewing, or mustering as a military host (see Num. i. 44; iii. 39; 1 Kings xx. 15; Isa. xiii. 4). In this place it may be taken in either of these senses, as may be best supposed to suit the connection. To me it seems that the connection seems to require the idea of a visitation for the purpose of relief or of deliverance; and to refer to the fact that at the end of that time there would be a reviewing, a mustering, an enrolment of those who should have been carried away to their distant prison-house, to ascertain how many remained, and to *marshal* them for their return to the land of their fathers (see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah). The word here used has *sometimes* the sense expressed in the margin, 'found wanting' (comp. 1 Sam. xx. 6; xxv. 15; Isa. xxxviii. 10); but such a sense does not suit the connection here. I regard the verse as an indication of future mercy and deliverance. They would be thrown into prison, and treated as captives of war; but after a long time they would be visited by the Great Deliverer of their nation, their covenant-keeping God, and reconducted to the land of their fathers.

23. *Then the moon shall be confounded.* The heavenly bodies are often employed in the sacred writings to denote the princes and kings of the earth. These expressions are not to be pressed *ad unguem* as if the sun denoted one thing and the moon another; but they are *general* poetic expressions designed to represent rulers, princes, and magistrates of all kinds (comp. Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 30, 31). ¶ *Shall be confounded.* Shall be covered with shame.

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CHAPTER XXV.

ANALYSIS.

For the general design and scope of this chapter, see the Analysis to ch. xxiv. It is a song of praise to God for the anticipated deliverance of his people from the bondage in Babylon. The desolation of Jerusalem and Judah had been described in ch. xxiv.; that chapter had closed with an intimation that Jehovah would again reign in glory on Mount Zion (ver. 23); and in view of this future deliverance the prophet breaks out into this beautiful song of praise. It was not unusual for the prophets to express, by anticipation, such songs of praise as would be celebrated by the people in times of signal deliverance (see Notes on ch. xii.) This song of praise is one of the most beautiful that is to be found in the writings of Isaiah. The essential idea is that which was hinted at in ch. xxiv. 23, that Jehovah would reign with a glory that would obscure the brightness of the sun and the moon on Mount Zion. Filled with the idea, the prophet fixes the eye on those future glories, and declares what shall occur under that reign. He sees Jehovah reigning there for a long series of years; and during that reign he sees (6) that he would provide a way by which the darkness might be removed from all nations (7); that he would originate that plan by which death would be swallowed up in victory (8); and that there he would execute a plan by which all his enemies would be laid low (9–12). The hymn is designed, therefore, to celebrate the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his ancient promises, and delivering his people from their long captivity by the destruction of Babylon (1–5); and the future glories that would shine forth under the reign of Jehovah on Mount Zion, including the arrangements of redeeming mercy for the world.

O LORD, thou *art* my God; I will [a] exalt thee, I will praise thy name: for thou hast done wonderful *things; thy* counsels of old *are* faithfulness [b] *and* truth.

a Ps.46.10. b Num.23.19.

That is, shall appear to shine with diminished beauty, as if it were *ashamed* in the superior glory that would shine around it. The sense is, that when the people should be returned to their land, the theocracy would be restored, and the magnificence of the kings and other civil rulers would be dimmed in the superior splendour of the reign of God. Probably there is reference here to the time when Jehovah would reign in Jerusalem through, or by means of, the Messiah. ¶ *In Mount Zion* (see Note on ch. i. 8). This would take place subsequently to the captivity, and pre-eminently under the reign of the Messiah. ¶ *And before his ancients.* That is, before the elders of the people; in the presence of those intrusted with authority and rule. ¶ *Gloriously.* He would reign gloriously when his laws should be respected and obeyed; when his character as King and Ruler should be developed; and when, under his sceptre, his kingdom should be augmented and extended. On this glad prospect the eye of the prophet was fixed; and this was the bright and splendid object in the 'vision' that served to relieve the darkness that was coming upon the nation. Present calamities may be borne, with the hope that Jehovah will reign more gloriously hereafter; and when the effect of all shall be such as to exalt Jehovah in the view of the nations. It may be added that when Jehovah, by the Messiah, shall reign over all the earth, all the glory of princes and monarchs shall be dimmed; the celebrity of their wisdom and power and plans shall be obscured in the superior splendour of the wisdom of God, in reigning through his Son over the human race. Come that blessed day; and speedily let the glory of the moon be confounded, and the sun be ashamed, and all inferior magnificence fade away before the splendour of the Sun of righteousness!

CHAPTER XXV.

1. *O Lord, thou art my God.* The prophet speaks, not in his own name, but in the name of the people that would be delivered from bondage. The sense is, that Jehovah had manifested himself as their covenant-keeping God; and that in view of his faithfulness in keeping his promises, they now had demonstration that he was *their* God. ¶ *I will exalt thee.* A form of expression often used to denote *praise* (Ps. cxviii. 28; cxlv. 1), meaning that the worshipper would exalt God in the view of his own mind, or would regard him as above all other beings and objects. ¶ *For thou hast done wonderful* things. On the meaning of the Heb. פֶּלֶא—'wonderful,'

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2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; *of* a defenced city a ruin: a [a] palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify [b] thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy

a Jer.51.37. b Rev.11.13.

see Note on ch. ix. 6. ¶ Thy *counsels of old.* Which were formed and revealed long since. The counsels referred to are those respecting the delivery of his people from bondage, which had been expressed even long before their captivity commenced, and which would be now completely and triumphantly fulfilled. ¶ Are *faithfulness.* Have been brought to pass; do not fail. ¶ And *truth.* Heb. אֹמֶן—whence our word *Amen.* LXX. Γένοιτο—'Let it be.' The word denotes that the purposes of God were *firm,* and would certainly be fulfilled.

2. *For thou hast made.* This is supposed to be uttered by the *Jews* who should return from Babylon, and therefore refers to what *would have been* seen by them. In their time it would have occurred that God had made of the city an heap. ¶ *Of a city.* I suppose the whole scope of the passage requires us to understand this of Babylon. There has been, however, a great variety of interpretation of this passage. Grotius supposed that Samaria was intended. Calvin that the word is used *collectively,* and that various cities are intended. Piscator that Rome, the seat of Antichrist, was intended. Jerome says that the Jews generally understand it of Rome. Aben Ezra and Kimchi, however, understand it to refer to many cities which they say will be destroyed in the times of Gog and Magog. Nearly all these opinions may be seen subjected to an examination, and shown to be unfounded, in Vitringa. ¶ *An heap.* It is reduced to ruins (see Notes on ch. xiii., xiv.) The ruin of Babylon *commenced* when it was taken by Cyrus, and the Jews were set at liberty; it was not *completed* until many centuries after. The form of the Hebrew here is, 'Thou hast placed *from* a city *to* a *ruin;*' that is, thou hast changed it *from* being a city *to* a pile of ruins. ¶ Of *a defenced city.* A city fortified, and made strong against the approach of an enemy. How true this was of Babylon may be seen in the description prefixed to chapter xiii. ¶ *A palace.* This word properly signifies the residence of a prince or monarch (Jer. xxx. 18; Amos i. 4, 7, 10, 12). Here it is applied to Babylon on account of its splendour, as if it were a vast palace, the residence of princes. ¶ *Of strangers.* Foreigners; a term often given to the inhabitants of foreign lands, and especially to the Babylonians (see Note on ch. i. 7; comp. Ezek. xxviii. 7; Joel iii. 17). It means that this was, by way of eminence, the city of the foreigners; the capital of the whole Pagan world; the city where foreigners congregated and dwelt. ¶ *It shall never be built.* (See Notes on ch. xiii. 19–22.)

3. *The strong people.* The reference here is not probably to the Babylonians, but to the surrounding nations. The deliverance of the Jews, and the destruction of Babylon, would be such striking events that they would lead the surrounding nations to acknowledge that it was the hand of God. ¶ *The city of the terrible nations.* The word 'city' here is taken probably in a collective sense, to denote the *cities* or the strong places of the surrounding nations which would be brought thus to tremble before God. The destruction of a city so proud and wicked as Babylon would alarm *them,* and would lead them to *fear* that they might share the same fate, especially as many of them had been associated in oppressing the now delivered people of the land of Judea.

4. *For thou hast been a strength to the poor.* Thou hast sustained and upheld them in their trials, and hast delivered them. God is often spoken of as the *strength* of his people. Isa. xxvi. 4: 'In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' Ps. xxvii. 1: 'The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?' Ps. xxviii. 8; xxix. 11; xxxi. 2; xlvi. 1; Isa. xlv. 24.—By the 'poor' and the 'needy' here undoubtedly are meant the captive Jews

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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.

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.

6 And in this mountain [a] shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast [b] of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of [c] wines on the lees well refined.

a ch.2.2,3. b Mat.22.2,&c. c Cant.5.1.

who had been stripped of their wealth, and carried from their homes, and confined in Babylon. ¶ *A refuge.* A place of safety; a retreat; a protection. God is often spoken of as such a *refuge;* Deut. xxxiii. 27: 'The eternal God is thy refuge.' (2 Sam. xxii. 3; Ps. ix. 9; xiv. 6; xlvi. 1, 7, 11; lvii. 1; lix. 16.) ¶ *From the storm.* This word (זֶרֶם) usually denotes a tempest of wind and rain. Here it is put for calamity and affliction. The figure is common in all languages. ¶ *A shadow from the heat.* (See Note on ch. iv. 6; xvi. 3; comp. ch. xxxii. 2.) ¶ *When the blast of the terrible ones.* Of the fierce, mighty, invading enemies. When they sweep down all before them as a furious tempest does. ¶ Is *as a storm against the wall.* For 'wall' here (קִיר), Lowth proposes to read קֹר, from קָרַר, *to be cold* or *cool,* and supposes that this means a winter's storm. In this interpretation also Vitringa and Cappellus coincide. But there is no need of supposing an error in the text. The idea is, probably, that of a fierce driving storm that would prostrate walls and houses; meaning a violent tempest, and intending to describe in a striking manner the severity of the calamities that had come upon the nation.

5. *Thou shalt bring down the noise.* The tumult; the sound which they make in entering into battle; or the note of triumph, and the sound of revelry. The phrase may refer either to their shout of exultation over their vanquished foes; or to the usual sound of revelry; or to the hum of business in a vast city. ¶ *Of strangers.* Of foreigners (see Note on ver. 2). ¶ *As the heat in a dry place.* The parallelism here requires that we should suppose the phrase 'with the shadow of a cloud' to be supplied in this hemistich, as it is obscurely expressed in our translation by the word 'even,' and it would then read thus:

As the heat in a dry place [by the shadow of a cloud],
The noise of the strangers shalt thou humble;
As the heat by the shadow of a cloud,
The exultation of the formidable ones shalt thou bring low.

The idea thus is plain. Heat pours down intensely on the earth, and if unabated would wither up every green thing, and dry up every stream and fountain. But a cloud intervenes, and checks the burning rays of the sun. So the wrath of the 'terrible ones,' the anger of the Babylonians, raged against the Jews. But the mercy of God interposed. It was like the intervening of a cloud to shut out the burning rays of the sun. It stayed the fury of their wrath, *and rendered them impotent to do injury, just as the intense burning rays of the sun are completely checked by an interposing cloud.* ¶ *The branch of the terrible ones.* This is a very unhappy translation. The word זָמִיר (*zâmir*) is indeed used to denote a branch, or bough, as derived from זָמַר, *to prune a vine;* but it also has the sense of *a song;* a song of praise, or a song of exultation, from a second signification of זָמַר, *to sing;* perhaps from the song with which the work of the vineyard was usually accompanied. See the verb used in this sense in Judg. v. 3; Ps. ix. 12; xxx. 5; xlvii. 7; and the word which occurs here (*zâmir*) used in the sense of *a song* in Ps. cxix. 54; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1; Job xxxv. 10. Here it is undoubtedly used in the sense of *a song,* meaning either a shout of victory or of revelry; and the idea of the prophet is, that this would be brought low by the destruction of Babylon, and by the return of the captive Jews to their own land.

6. *And in this mountain.* In mount

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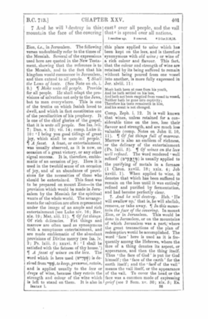

7 And he will [1] destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast [2] over all people, and the vail that [a] is spread over all nations,

[1] swallow up. [2] covered. [a] 2 Cor.3.15,16.

Zion, *i.e.*, in Jerusalem. The following verses undoubtedly refer to the times of the Messiah. Several of the expressions used here are quoted in the New Testament, showing that the reference is to the Messiah, and to the fact that his kingdom would commence in Jerusalem, and then extend to all people. ¶ *Shall the* LORD *of hosts.* (See Note on ch. i. 9.) ¶ *Make unto all people.* Provide for all people. He shall adapt the provisions of salvation not only to the Jews, but to men everywhere. This is one of the truths on which Isaiah loved to dwell, and which in fact constitutes one of the peculiarities of his prophecy. It is one of the chief glories of the gospel, that it is *unto all people.* See Isa. lvii. 7; Dan. v. 19; vii. 14; comp. Luke ii. 10: 'I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be *unto all people.*' ¶ *A feast.* A feast, or entertainment, was usually observed, as it is now, on occasion of a great victory, or any other signal success. It is, therefore, emblematic of an occasion of joy. Here it is used in the twofold sense of an occasion of joy, and of an abundance of provisions for the necessities of those who should be entertained. This feast was to be prepared on mount Zion—in the provision which would be made in Jerusalem by the Messiah for the spiritual wants of the whole world. The arrangements for salvation are often represented under the image of an ample and rich entertainment (see Luke xiv. 16; Rev. xix. 19; Mat. xiii. 11). ¶ *Of fat things.* Of rich delicacies. Fat things and marrow are often used as synonymous with a sumptuous entertainment, and are made emblematic of the abundant provisions of Divine mercy (see Isa. lv. 2; Ps. lxiii. 5; xxxvi. 8: 'I shall be satisfied with the fatness of thy house.') ¶ *A feast of wines on the lees.* The word which is here used (שְׁמָרִים) is derived from שָׁמַר, *to keep, preserve, retain,* and is applied usually to the *lees* or *dregs* of wine, because they *retain* the strength and colour of the wine which is left to stand on them. It is also in this place applied to *wine* which has been kept on the lees, and is therefore synonymous with *old wine;* or wine of a rich colour and flavour. This fact, that the colour and strength of wine are retained by its being suffered to remain without being poured from one vessel into another, is more fully expressed in Jer. xlviii. 11:

Moab hath been at ease from his youth,
And he hath settled on his lees,
And hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel,
Neither hath he gone into captivity;
Therefore his taste remaineth in him,
And his scent is not changed.

Comp. Zeph. i. 12. It is well known that wines, unless retained for a considerable time on the lees, lose their flavour and strength, and are much less valuable (comp. Notes on John ii. 10, 11). ¶ *Of fat things full of marrow.* Marrow is also an emblem of richness, or the delicacy of the entertainment (Ps. lxiii. 5). ¶ *Of wines on the lees well refined.* The word rendered 'well refined' (מְזֻקָּקִים) is usually applied to the purifying of metals in a furnace (1 Chron. xxviii. 18; xxix. 4; Job xxviii. 1). When applied to wine, it denotes that which has been suffered to remain on the lees until it was entirely refined and purified by fermentation, and had become perfectly clear.

7. *And he will destroy.* Heb. 'He will swallow up,' that is, he will abolish, remove, or take away. ¶ *In this mountain the face of the covering.* In mount Zion, or in Jerusalem. This would be done in Jerusalem, or on the mountains of which Jerusalem was a part, where the great transactions of the plan of redemption would be accomplished. The word 'face' here is used as it is frequently among the Hebrews, where the face of a thing denotes its aspect, or appearance, and then the thing itself. Thus 'the face of God' is put for God himself; the 'face of the earth' for the earth itself; and the 'face of the vail' means the vail itself, or the appearance of the vail. To cover the head or the face was a common mode of expressing *grief* (see 2 Sam. xv. 30; xix. 5; Es.

ISAIAH I. 26

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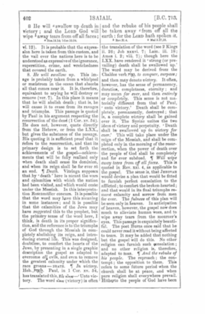

8 He will [a] swallow up death in victory; and the LORD God will wipe [b] away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away [c] from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it.*

[a] Hos.13.14; 1 Cor.15.54. [b] Rev.21.4. [c] Mal.3.17,18.

vi. 12). It is probable that the expression here is taken from this custom, and the vail over the nations here is to be understood as expressive of the ignorance, superstition, crime, and wretchedness that covered the earth.

8. *He will swallow up.* This image is probably taken from a whirlpool or mælstrom in the ocean that absorbs all that comes near it. It is, therefore, equivalent to saying he will destroy or remove (ver. 7). In this place it means that he will abolish death; that is, he will cause it to *cease* from its ravages and triumphs. This passage is quoted by Paul in his argument respecting the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 54). He does not, however, quote directly from the Hebrew, or from the LXX., but gives the substance of the passage. His quoting it is sufficient proof that it refers to the resurrection, and that its primary design is to set forth the achievements of the gospel—achievements that will be fully realized only when death shall cease its dominion, and when its reign shall be for ever at an end. ¶ *Death.* Vitringa supposes that by 'death' here is meant the wars and calamities with which the nation had been visited, and which would cease under the Messiah. In this interpretation Rosenmüller concurs. It is possible that the word may have this meaning in some instances; and it is possible that the calamities of the Jews may have *suggested* this to the prophet, but the primary sense of the word here, I think, is death in its proper signification, and the reference is to the triumphs of God through the Messiah in completely abolishing its reign, and introducing eternal life. This was designed, doubtless, to comfort the hearts of the Jews, by presenting in a single graphic description the gospel as adapted to overcome *all* evils, and even to remove the greatest calamity under which the race groans—DEATH. ¶ *In victory.* Heb. לָנֶצַח. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 54, has translated this, Εἰς νῖκος—'Unto victory. The word νῖκος (victory) is often the translation of the word (see 2 Kings ii. 26; Job xxxvi. 7; Lam. iii. 18; Amos i. 2; viii. 7); though here the LXX. have rendered it 'strong (or prevailing) death shall be swallowed up.' The word may be derived from the Chaldee verb נְצַח, *to conquer, surpass;* and then may denote *victory.* It often, however, has the sense of permanency, duration, completness, eternity; and may mean *for ever,* and then *entirely* or *completely.* This sense is not materially different from that of Paul, 'unto victory.' Death shall be completely, permanently, destroyed; that is, a complete *victory* shall be gained over it. The Syriac unites the two ideas of victory and perpetuity. 'Death shall be swallowed up *in victory for ever.*' This will take place under the reign of the Messiah, and shall be completed only in the morning of the resurrection, when the power of death over the people of God shall be completely and for ever subdued. ¶ *Will wipe away tears from off all faces.* This is quoted in Rev. xxi. 4, as applicable to the gospel. The sense is, that JEHOVAH would devise a plan that would be fitted to furnish perfect consolation to the afflicted; to comfort the broken-hearted; and that would in its final triumphs remove calamity and sorrow from men for ever. The *fulness* of this plan will be seen only in heaven. In anticipation of heaven, however, the gospel now does much to alleviate human woes, and to wipe away tears from the mourner's eyes. This passage is exquisitely beautiful. The poet Burns once said that he could never read it without being affected to tears. It may be added that nothing but the gospel will do this. No other religion can furnish such consolation; and no other religion is, therefore, adapted to man. ¶ *And the rebuke of his people.* The reproach; the contempt; the opposition to them. This refers to some future period when the church shall be at peace, and when pure religion shall everywhere prevail. Hitherto the people of God have been

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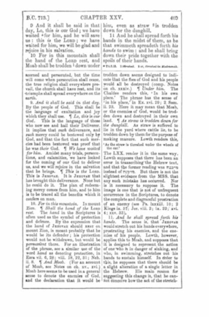

9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited [a] for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden [1] down under him, even as straw [2] is trodden down for the dunghill.

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.

[a] Tit.2.13. [1] or, threshed. [2] or, threshed in Madmenah.

scorned and persecuted, but the time will come when persecution shall cease, the true religion shall everywhere prevail, the church shall have rest, and its triumphs shall spread everywhere on the earth.

9. *And it shall be said in that day.* By the people of God. This shall be the language of exultation and joy which they shall use. ¶ *Lo, this is our God.* This is the language of those who now see and hail their Deliverer. It implies that *such* deliverance, and *such* mercy could be bestowed only by God, and that the fact that such mercies had been bestowed was proof that he was *their* God. ¶ *We have waited for him.* Amidst many trials, persecutions, and calamities, we have looked for the coming of our God to deliver us, and we will rejoice in the salvation that he brings. ¶ *This is the* LORD. This is JEHOVAH. It is JEHOVAH that has brought this deliverance. None but he could do it. The plan of redeeming mercy comes from him, and to him is to be traced all the benefits which it confers on man.

10. *For in this mountain.* In mount Zion. ¶ *Shall the hand of the* LORD *rest.* The *hand* in the Scriptures is often used as the symbol of protection and defence. By the expression that the hand of JEHOVAH should REST on mount Zion, is meant probably that he would be its defender; his protection would not be withdrawn, but would be *permanent* there. For an illustration of the phrase, see a similar use of the word *hand* as denoting protection, in Ezra vii. 6, 28; viii. 18, 22, 31; Neh. ii. 8. ¶ *And Moab.* (For an account of Moab, see Notes on ch. xv., xvi.) Moab here seems to be used in a general sense to denote the enemies of God, and the declaration that it would be trodden down seems designed to indicate that the foes of God and his people would all be destroyed (comp. Notes on ch. xxxiv.) ¶ *Under him.* The Chaldee renders this, 'In his own place.' The phrase has the sense of 'in his place,' in Ex. xvi. 29; 2 Sam. ii. 23. Here it may mean that Moab, or the enemies of God, would be trodden down and destroyed in their own land. ¶ *As straw is trodden down for the dunghill.* As straw is suffered to lie in the yard where cattle lie, to be trodden down by them for the purpose of making manure. Lowth renders this,

'As the straw is threshed under the wheels of the car.'

The LXX. render it in the same way. Lowth supposes that there has been an error in transcribing the Hebrew text, and that the former reading was [illegible] instead of [illegible]. But there is not the slightest evidence from the MSS. that any such mistake has occurred. Nor is it necessary to suppose it. The image is one that is not of unfrequent occurrence in the Scriptures, to denote the complete and disgraceful prostration of an enemy (see Ps. lxxxiii. 10; 2 Kings ix. 37; Jer. viii. 2; ix. 22; xvi. 4; xxv. 33).

11. *And he shall spread forth his hands.* The sense is, that JEHOVAH would stretch out his hands everywhere, prostrating his enemies, and the enemies of his people. Lowth, however, applies this to Moab, and supposes that it is designed to represent the action of one who is in danger of sinking, and who, in swimming, stretches out his hands to sustain himself. In order to this, he supposes that there should be a slight alteration of a single letter in the Hebrew. His main reason for suggesting this change is, that he cannot conceive how the act of the stretch-

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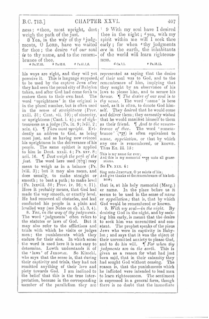

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ness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

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.

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.

his ways are right, and they will yet perceive it. This is language supposed to be used by the captive Jews after they had seen the proud city of Babylon taken, and after God had come forth to restore them to their own land. The word 'uprightness' in the original is in the plural number, but is often used in the sense of *straightness* (Prov. xxiii. 31; Cant. vii. 10); of sincerity, or uprightness (Cant. i. 4); or of righteousness as a judge (Ps. ix. 9; lviii. 2; xcix. 4). ¶ *Thou most upright.* Evidently an address to God, as being most just, and as having now evinced his uprightness in the deliverance of his people. The same epithet is applied to him in Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. xxv. 8; xcii. 16. ¶ *Dost weigh the path of the just.* The word here used (תְּפַלֵּס) may mean to weigh as in a balance (Ps. lviii. 3); but it may also mean, and does usually, to make straight or smooth; to beat a path; to make level (Ps. lxxviii. 50; Prov. iv. 26; v. 21). Here it probably means, that God had made the way smooth, or exactly level. He had removed all obstacles, and had conducted his people in a plain and levelled way (see Notes on ch. xl. 3, 4).

8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments.* The word 'judgments' often refers to the statutes or laws of God. But it may also refer to the afflictions and trials with which he visits or judges men; the punishments which they endure for their sins. In which sense the word is used here it is not easy to determine. Lowth understands it of the 'laws' of JEHOVAH. So Kimchi, who says that the sense is, that during their captivity and trials, they had not remitted anything of their love and piety towards God. I am inclined to the belief that this is the true interpretation, because in the corresponding member of the parallelism they are represented as saying that the desire of their soul was to God, and to the remembrance of him, implying that they sought by an observance of his laws to please him, and to secure his favour. ¶ *The desire of our soul is to thy name.* The word 'name' is here used, as it is often, to denote God himself. They desired that he would come and deliver them; they earnestly wished that he would manifest himself to them as their friend. ¶ *And to the remembrance of thee.* The word 'remembrance' (זֵכֶר) is often equivalent to *name, appellation*, or that by which any one is remembered, or known. Thus Ex. iii. 15:

This is my name for ever;
And this is my memorial זִכְרִי unto all generations.

So Ps. xxx. 4:

Sing unto JEHOVAH, O ye saints of his;
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;

that is, at his holy memorial (Marg.) or name. In the place before us it seems to be used in the sense of *name* or *appellation;* that is, that by which God would be remembered or known.

9. *With my soul—in the night.* By desiring God in the night, and by seeking him early, is meant that the desire to seek him was unremitted and constant. The prophet speaks of the pious Jews who were in captivity in Babylon; and says that it was the object of their unremitted anxiety to please God, and to do his will. ¶ *For when thy judgments are in the earth.* This is given as a reason for what had just been said, that in their calamity they had sought God without ceasing. The reason is, that the punishments which he inflicted were intended to lead men to learn righteousness. The sentiment is expressed in a general form, though there is no doubt that the immediate

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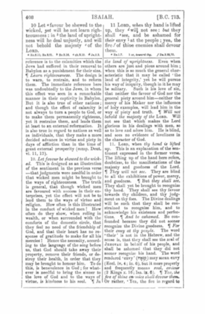

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10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

11 LORD, *when* thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: *but* they shall see, and be ashamed for *their* envy [1] at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

[1] or, toward thy.

reference is to the calamities which the Jews had suffered in their removal to Babylon as a punishment for their sins. ¶ *Learn righteousness.* The design is to warn, to restrain, and to reform them. The immediate reference here was undoubtedly to the Jews, in whom this effect was seen in a remarkable manner in their captivity in Babylon. But it is also true of other nations; and though the effect of calamity is not always to turn a people to God, or to make them permanently righteous, yet it restrains them, and leads them at least to an external reformation. It is also true in regard to nations as well as individuals, that they make a more decided advance in virtue and piety in days of affliction than in the time of great external prosperity (comp. Deut. vi. 11, 12).

10. *Let favour be showed to the wicked.* This is designed as an illustration of the sentiment in the previous verse—that judgments were needful in order that wicked men might be brought to the ways of righteousness. The truth is general, that though wicked men are favoured with success in their enterprises, yet the effect will not be to lead them to the ways of virtue and religion. How often is this illustrated in the conduct of wicked men! How often do they show, when rolling in wealth, or when surrounded with the comforts of the domestic circle, that they feel no need of the friendship of God, and that their heart has no response of gratitude to make for all his mercies! Hence the necessity, according to the language of the song before us, that God should take away their property, remove their friends, or destroy their health, in order that they may be brought to honour him. To do this, is benevolence in God; for whatever is needful to bring the sinner to the love of God and to the ways of virtue, is kindness to his soul. ¶ *In the land of uprightness.* Even when others are just and pious around him; when this is so much the general characteristic that it may be called 'the land of integrity,' yet he will pursue his way of iniquity, though in it he may be solitary. Such is his love of sin, that neither the favour of God nor the general piety around him—neither the mercy of his Maker nor the influence of holy examples, will lead him in the way of piety and truth. ¶ *Will not behold the majesty of the* LORD. Will not see that which makes the Lord glorious in his dealings with men, so as to love and adore him. He is blind, and sees no evidence of loveliness in the character of God.

11. LORD, when *thy hand is lifted up.* This is an explanation of the sentiment expressed in the former verse. The lifting up of the hand here refers, doubtless, to the manifestations of the majesty and goodness of the Lord. ¶ *They will not see.* They are blind to all the exhibitions of power, mercy, and goodness. ¶ But *they shall see.* They shall yet be brought to recognise thy hand. They shall see thy favour towards thy children, and thy judgment on thy foes. The Divine dealings will be such that they shall be constrained to recognise him, and to acknowledge his existence and perfections. ¶ *And be ashamed.* Be confounded because they did not sooner recognise the Divine goodness. ¶ *For their envy at thy people.* The word 'their' is not in the Hebrew, and the sense is, that they shall see the zeal of JEHOVAH in behalf of his people, and shall be ashamed that they did not sooner recognise his hand. The word rendered 'envy' (קִנְאַת) may mean envy (Eccl. iv. 4; ix. 6), but it more properly and frequently means *zeal, ardour* (2 Kings x. 16; Isa. ix. 6). ¶ *Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.* Or rather, 'Yea, the fire in regard to

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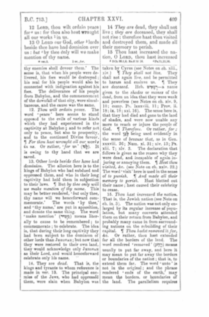

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXVI. 409

12 LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works [1] in us.

13 O LORD our God, *other* lords beside thee have had dominion over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

[1] or, for.

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.

15 Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased

thy enemies shall devour them.' The sense is, that when his people were delivered, his foes would be destroyed; his zeal for his people would also be connected with indignation against his foes. The deliverance of his people from Babylon, and the commencement of the downfall of that city, were simultaneous, and the cause was the same.

12. *Thou wilt ordain peace.* The word 'peace' here seems to stand opposed to the evils of various kinds which they had experienced in the captivity at Babylon; and to refer not only to peace, but also to prosperity, and to the continued Divine favour. ¶ *For thou hast wrought all our works in us.* Or rather, '*for us*' (לָנוּ). It is owing to thy hand that we are saved.

13. Other *lords beside thee have had dominion.* The allusion here is to the kings of Babylon who had subdued and oppressed them, and who in their long captivity had held them in subjection to their laws. ¶ But *by thee only will we make mention of thy name.* This may be better rendered, '*but only thee,* thy name will we henceforward commemorate.' The words 'by thee,' and 'thy name,' are put in apposition, and denote the same thing. The word 'make mention' (נַזְכִּיר) means literally to cause to be remembered; to commemorate; to celebrate. The idea is, that during their long captivity they had been subject to the dominion of other lords than JEHOVAH; but now that they were restored to their own land, they would acknowledge only JEHOVAH as their Lord, and would henceforward celebrate only his name.

14. They are *dead.* That is, the kings and tyrants to whom reference is made in ver. 13. The principal enemies of the Jews, who had oppressed them, were slain when Babylon was taken by Cyrus (see Notes on ch. xiii., xiv.) ¶ *They shall not live.* They shall not again live, and be permitted to harass and enslave us. ¶ They *are deceased.* Heb. רְפָאִים—a name given to the *shades* or *manes* of the dead, from an idea that they were weak and powerless (see Notes on ch. xiv. 9, 10; comp. Ps. lxxxviii. 11; Prov. ii. 18; ix. 18; xxi. 16). The sense here is, that they had died and gone to the land of shades, and were now unable any more to reach or injure the people of God. ¶ *Therefore.* Or rather, *for;* the word לָכֵן being used evidently in the sense of *because that,* as in Gen. xxxviii. 26; Num. xi. 31; xiv. 13; Ps. xlii. 7; xlv. 3. The declaration that follows is given as the reason why they were dead, and incapable of again injuring or annoying them. ¶ *Hast thou visited, &c.* (see Note on ch. xxiv. 22.) The word 'visit' here is used in the sense of *to punish.* ¶ *And made all their memory to perish.* Hast blotted out their name; hast caused their celebrity to cease.

15. *Thou hast increased the nation.* That is, the *Jewish* nation (see Note on ch. ix. 3). The nation was not only enlarged by its regular increase of population, but many converts attended them on their return from Babylon, and probably many came in from surrounding nations on the rebuilding of their capital. ¶ *Thou hadst removed it far, &c.* Or rather, thou hast extended far all the borders of the land. The word rendered 'removed' (רִחַקְתָּ) means usually to put far away, and here it may mean to put far away the borders or boundaries of the nation; that is, to extend them *far.* The word 'unto' is not in the original; and the phrase rendered 'ends of the earth,' may mean the borders, or boundaries of the land. The parallelism requires

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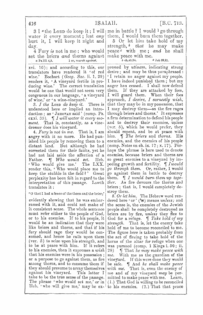

3 I [a] the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4 Fury *is* not in me: who would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle? I would [1] go through them, I would burn them together.

5 Or let him take hold of my strength, [b] *that* he may make peace [c] with me; *and* he shall make peace with me.

a Ps.121.4,5. 1 or, march against. b ch.45.24. c Job 22.21.

xvi. 16); and according to this, our translators have rendered it 'of red wine.' Bochart (*Geog. Sac.* ii. 1, 29) renders it, 'A vineyard fertile in producing wine.' The correct translation would be one that would not seem very congruous in our language, 'a vineyard of wine,' or 'a wine-vineyard.'

3. *I the* LORD *do keep it.* There is understood here or implied an introduction; as 'JEHOVAH said' (comp. Ps. cxxi. 35). ¶ *I will water it every moment.* That is, constantly, as a vine-dresser does his vineyard.

4. *Fury is not in me.* That is, I am angry with it no more. He had punished his people by removing them to a distant land. But although he had corrected them for their faults, yet he had not laid aside the affection of a Father. ¶ *Who would set.* Heb. 'Who would give me.' The LXX. render this, 'Who would place me to keep the stubble in the field?' Great perplexity has been felt in regard to the interpretation of this passage. Lowth translates it:

'O that I had a fence of the thorn and the brier;'

evidently showing that he was embarrassed with it, and could not make of it consistent sense. The whole sentence must refer either to the people of God, or to his enemies. If to his people, it would be an indication that they were like briers and thorns, and that if his fury should rage they would be consumed, and hence he calls upon them (ver. 5) to seize upon his strength, and to be at peace with him. If it refers to his enemies, then it expresses a wish that his enemies were in his possession; or a purpose to go against them, as fire among thorns, and to consume them if they should presume to array themselves against his vineyard. This latter I take to be the true sense of the passage. The phrase 'who would set me,' or in Heb. 'who will give me,' may be expressed by *utinam*, indicating strong desire; and may be thus paraphrased: 'I retain no anger against my people. I have indeed punished them; but my anger has ceased. I shall now defend them. If they are attacked by foes, I will guard them. When their foes approach, *I desire, I earnestly wish,* that they may be in my possession, that I may destroy them—as the fire rages through briers and thorns.' It expresses a firm determination to defend his people and to destroy their enemies, unless (ver. 5), which he would prefer, they should repent, and be at peace with him. ¶ *The briers* and *thorns.* His enemies, and the enemies of his people (comp. Notes on ch. ix. 17; x. 17). Perhaps the phrase is here used to denote enemies, because briers and thorns are so great enemies to a vineyard by impeding growth and fertility. ¶ *I would go through them.* Or, rather, I would go against them in battle to destroy them. ¶ *I would burn them up together.* As fire devours the thorns and briers; that is, I would completely destroy them.

5. *Or let him.* The Hebrew word rendered here 'or' (אוֹ) means *unless;* and the sense is, the enemies of the Jewish people shall be completely destroyed as briers are by fire, *unless* they flee to God for a refuge. ¶ *Take hold of my strength.* That is, let the enemy take hold of me to become reconciled to me. The figure here is taken probably from the act of fleeing to take hold of the horns of the altar for refuge when one was pursued (comp. 1 Kings i. 50; ii. 28). ¶ That *he may make peace with me.* With me as the guardian of the vineyard. If this were done they would be safe. ¶ And *he shall make peace with me.* That is, even the enemy of me and of my vineyard may be permitted to make peace with me. Learn, (1.) That God is willing to be reconciled to his enemies. (2.) That that peace

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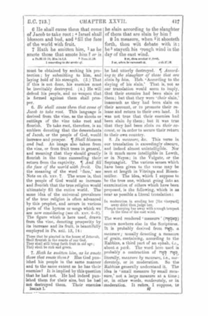

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: [a] Israel shall blossom and bud, and [b] fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 Hath he smitten him, [1] as he smote those that smote him? *or* is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

8 In measure, [2] when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he [3] stayeth his [c] rough wind in the day of the east wind.

a Ps.92.13-15; Hos.14.5,6. b Rom.11.12. 1 according to the stroke of. 2 or, thou sendest it forth. 3 or, when he removeth it. c ch.37.18.

must be obtained by seeking his protection; by submitting to him, and laying hold of his strength. (3.) That if this is not done, his enemies must be inevitably destroyed. (4.) He will defend his people, and no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper.

6. *He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root.* This language is derived from the vine, as the shoots or cuttings of the vine take root and flourish. To take root, therefore, is an emblem denoting that the descendants of Jacob, or the people of God, would increase and prosper. ¶ *Shall blossom and bud.* An image also taken from the vine, or from fruit trees in general, and meaning that they should greatly flourish in the time succeeding their return from the captivity. ¶ *And fill the face of the world with fruit.* On the meaning of the word 'face,' see Note on ch. xxv. 7. The sense is, that the people of God would so increase and flourish that the true religion would ultimately fill the entire world. The same idea of the universal prevalence of the true religion is often advanced by this prophet, and occurs in various parts of the hymns or songs which we are now considering (see ch. xxv. 6–8). The figure which is here used, drawn from the vine, denoting prosperity by its increase and its fruit, is beautifully employed in Ps. xcii. 13, 14:

Those that be planted in the house of Jehovah,
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be rich and green.

7. *Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote them?* Has God punished his people in the same manner and to the same extent as he has their enemies? It is implied by this question that he had not. He had indeed punished them for their sins, but he had not destroyed them. Their enemies he had utterly destroyed. ¶ *According to the slaughter of those that are slain by him.* Heb. 'According to the slaying of his slain.' That is, not as our translation would seem to imply, that their enemies had been slain BY them; but that they were '*their* slain,' inasmuch as they had been slain on their account, or to promote their release and return to their own land. It was not true that their enemies had been slain *by* them; but it was true that they had been *slain on their account,* or in order to secure their return to their own country.

8. *In measure,* &c. This verse in our translation is exceedingly obscure, and indeed almost unintelligible. Nor is it much more intelligible in Lowth, or in Noyes; in the Vulgate, or the Septuagint. The various senses which have been given to the verse may be seen at length in Vitringa and Rosenmüller. The idea, which I suppose to be the true one, without going into an examination of others which have been proposed, is the following, which is as near as possible a literal translation:

In moderation in sending her [the vineyard] away didst thou judge her,
Though carrying her away with a rough tempest in the time of the east wind.

The word rendered 'measure' (בְּסַאסְּאָה) occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. It is probably derived from סְאָה, a *measure;* usually denoting a measure of grain, containing, according to the Rabbins, a third part of an ephah, *i.e.,* about a *peck.* The word here used is probably a contraction of סְאָה סְאָה, literally, *measure by measure,* i.e., *moderately,* or in moderation. So the Rabbins generally understand it. The idea is 'small measure by small measure,' not a large measure at a time; or, in other words, *moderately,* or in moderation. It refers, I suppose, to

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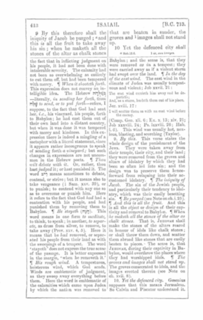

9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; [a] and this *is* all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and [1] images shall not stand up.

10 Yet the defenced city *shall*

a Heb.12.6. 1 or, sun images.

the fact that in inflicting judgment on his people, it had not been done with intolerable severity. The calamity had not been so overwhelming as entirely to cut them off, but had been tempered with mercy. ¶ *When it shooteth forth.* This expression does not convey an intelligible idea. The Hebrew בְּשַׁלְחָהּ—literally, *in sending her forth,* from שָׁלַח *to send, or to put forth*—refers, I suppose, to the fact that God had sent her, *i.e.,* his vineyard, his people, forth to Babylon; he had cast them out of their own land into a distant country, but when it was done it was tempered with mercy and kindness. In this expression there is indeed a mingling of a metaphor with a literal statement, since it appears rather incongruous to speak of sending forth *a vineyard;* but such changes in expressions are not uncommon in the Hebrew poets. ¶ *Thou wilt debate with it.* Or, rather, thou hast *judged* it; or hast punished it. The word רִיב means sometimes to debate, contend, or strive; but it means also to take vengeance (1 Sam. xxv. 39), or to punish; to contend with any one so as to overcome or punish him. Here it refers to the fact that God *had* had a contention with his people, and had punished them by removing them to Babylon. ¶ *He stayeth* (הָגָה). This word means in one form *to meditate,* to think, to speak; in another, *to separate,* as dross from silver, to remove, to take away (Prov. xxv. 4, 5). Here it means that he *had* removed, or separated his people from their land as with the sweepings of a tempest. The word 'stayeth' does not express the true sense of the passage. It is better expressed in the margin, 'when he removeth it.' ¶ *His rough wind.* A tempestuous, boisterous wind, which God sends. Winds are emblematic of judgment, as they sweep away everything before them. Here the word is emblematic of the calamities which came upon Judea by which the nation was removed to Babylon; and the sense is, that they were removed *as in* a tempest; they were carried away as if a violent storm had swept over the land. ¶ *In the day of the east wind.* The east wind in the climate of Judea was usually tempestuous and violent; Job xxvii. 21:

The east wind carrieth him away and he departeth;
And, as a storm, hurleth them out of his place.

Jer. xviii. 17:

I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.

(Comp. Gen. xli. 6; Ex. x. 13; xiv. 21; Job xxxviii. 24; Ps. lxxviii. 26; Hab. i. 9). This wind was usually hot, noxious, blasting, and scorching (Taylor).

9. *By this.* This verse states the whole design of the punishment of the Jews. They were taken away from their temple, their city, and their land; they were removed from the groves and altars of idolatry by which they had been so often led into sin; and the design was to preserve them henceforward from relapsing into their accustomed idolatry. ¶ *The iniquity of Jacob.* The sin of the Jewish people, and particularly their tendency to idolatry, which was their easily besetting sin. ¶ *Be purged* (see Note on ch. i. 25). ¶ *And this is all the fruit.* And this is all the *object* or *design* of their captivity and removal to Babylon. ¶ *When he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones.* That is, JEHOVAH shall make the stones of the altars reared in honour of idols like chalk stones; or shall throw them down, and scatter them abroad like stones that are easily beaten to pieces. The sense is, that JEHOVAH, during their captivity in Babylon, would overthrow the places where they had worshipped idols. ¶ *The groves and images shall not stand up.* The groves consecrated to idols, and the images erected therein (see Note on ch. xvii. 8).

10. *Yet the defenced city.* Gesenius supposes that this means Jerusalem. So Calvin and Piscator understand it.

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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.

11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come *and* set them on fire; for [a] 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.

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 [b] ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

[a] De.32.28; Ho.4.6. [b] Je.3.17.

Others understand it of Samaria, others of Babylon (as Vitringa, Rosenmüller, and Grotius), and others of cities in general, denoting those in Judea, or in other places. To me it seems plain that Babylon is referred to. The whole description seems to require this; and especially the fact that this song is supposed to be sung *after* the return from the captivity to celebrate their deliverance. It is natural, therefore, that they should record the fact that the strong and mighty city where they had been so long in captivity, was now completely destroyed. For the meaning of the phrase 'defenced city,' see Note on ch. xxv. 2. ¶ Shall be *desolate* (see ch. xxv. 2; comp. Notes on ch. xiii.) ¶ *The habitation forsaken.* The *habitation* here referred to is Babylon. It means the habitation or dwelling-place where we have so long dwelt as captives (comp. Prov. iii. 33; xxi. 20; xxiv. 15). ¶ *And left like a wilderness.* See the description of Babylon in the Notes on ch. xiii. 20-22. ¶ *There shall the calf feed.* It shall become a vast desert, and be a place for beasts of the forest to range in (comp. ch. vii. 23; see Note on ch. v. 17). ¶ *And consume the branches thereof.* The branches of the trees and shrubs that shall spring up spontaneously in the vast waste where Babylon was.

11. *When the boughs thereof are withered.* This is a further description of the desolation which would come upon Babylon. The idea is, that Babylon would be forsaken until the trees should grow and decay, and the branches should fall to be collected for burning. That is, the desolation should be entire, undisturbed, and long continued. The idea of the desolation is, therefore, in this verse carried forward, and a new circumstance is introduced to make it more graphic and striking. Lowth, however, supposes that this refers to the vineyard, and to the fact that the vine-twigs are collected in the East from the scarcity of fuel for burning. But it seems to me that the obvious reference is to Babylon, and that it is an image of the great and prolonged desolation that was coming upon that city. ¶ *They shall be broken off.* That is, by their own weight as they decay, or by the hands of those who come to collect them for fuel. ¶ *The women come.* Probably it was the office mainly of the women to collect the fuel which might be necessary for culinary purposes. In eastern climates but little is needed; and that is collected of the twigs of vineyards, of withered stubble, straw, hay, dried roots, &c., wherever they can be found. ¶ And *set them on fire.* That is, to burn them for fuel. ¶ *Of no understanding.* Of no right views of God and his government—wicked, sinful (Prov. vi. 32; xviii. 2; Jer. v. 21).

12. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off.* The word which is here used ([illegible]) means properly to beat off with a stick, as fruit from a tree (Deut. xx. 20). It also means to beat out grain with a stick (Judg. vi. 11; Ruth ii. 17). The word which is rendered in the other member of the sentence, 'shall be gathered' ([illegible]), is applied to the act of *collecting* fruit after it has been beaten from a tree, or grain after it has been threshed. The use of these words here shows that the image is taken from the act of collecting fruit or grain after harvest; and the expression means, that as the husbandman gathers in his fruit, so God would gather in his people. In the

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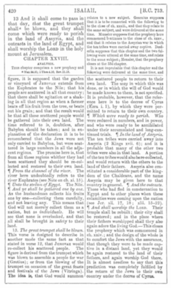

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13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the great trumpet shall[a] be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ANALYSIS.

THIS chapter comprises a new prophecy and relates to a new subject. Gesenius supposes that it is to be connected with the following to to the close of ch. xxxiii., and that they relate to the same subject, and were delivered at the same time. Munster supposes that the prophecy here commenced continues to the close of ch. xxxv., and that it relates to the Assyrian war in which the ten tribes were carried away captive. Doederlin supposes that this chapter and the two following were uttered at the same time, and relate to the same subject; Hensler, that the prophecy closes at the 33d chapter.

It is not improbable that this chapter and the following were delivered at the same time, and

[a] Mat.24.31; 1 Thes.4.16; Rev.11.15.

figure, it is supposed that the garden or vineyard of JEHOVAH extends from the Euphrates to the Nile; that his people are scattered in all that country; that there shall be agitation or a shaking in all that region as when a farmer beats off his fruit from the tree, or beats out his grain; and that the result would be that all those scattered people would be gathered into their own land. The time referred to is, doubtless, after Babylon should be taken; and in explanation of the declaration it is to be remembered that the Jews were not only carried to Babylon, but were scattered in large numbers in all the adjacent regions. The promise here is, that from all those regions whither they had been scattered they should be re-collected and restored to their own land. ¶ *From the channel of the river.* The river here undoubtedly refers to the river Euphrates (see Note on ch. xi. 15). ¶ *Unto the stream of Egypt.* The Nile. ¶ *And ye shall be gathered one by one.* As the husbandman collects his fruits one by one—collecting them carefully, and not leaving any. This means that God will not merely collect them as a nation, but as *individuals*. He will see that none is overlooked, and that all shall be brought in safety to their land.

13. *The great trumpet shall be blown.* This verse is designed to describe in another mode the same fact as that stated in verse 12, that JEHOVAH would re-collect his scattered people. The figure is derived from the trumpet which was blown to assemble a people for war (Grotius); or from the blowing of the trumpet on occasion of the great feasts and festivals of the Jews (Vitringa). The idea is, that God would summon the scattered people to return to their own land. The *way* in which this was done, or in which the will of God would be made known to them, is not specified. It is probable, however, that the reference here is to the decree of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), by which they were permitted to return to their own country. ¶ *Which were ready to perish.* Who were reduced in numbers, and in power, and who were ready to be annihilated under their accumulated and long-continued trials. ¶ *In the land of Assyria.* The ten tribes were carried away into Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 6); and it is probable that many of the other two tribes were also in that land. A portion of the ten tribes would also be re-collected, and would return with the others to the land of their fathers. Assyria also constituted a considerable part of the kingdom of the Chaldeans, and the name Assyria may be given here to that country in general. ¶ *And the outcasts.* Those who had fled in consternation to Egypt and to other places when these calamities were coming upon the nation (see Jer. xli. 17, 18; xlii. 15–22). ¶ *And shall worship the* LORD. Their temple shall be rebuilt; their city shall be restored; and in the place where their fathers worshipped shall they also again adore the living God.—This closes the prophecy which was commenced in ch. xxiv.; and the design of the whole is to comfort the Jews with the assurance, that though they were to be made captive in a distant land, yet they would be again restored to the land of their fathers, and again worship God there. It is almost needless to say that this prediction was completely fulfilled by the return of the Jews to their own country under the decree of Cyrus.

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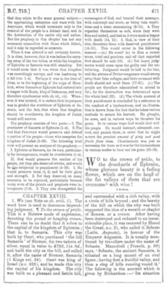

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that they relate to the same general subject—the approaching calamities and wars with the Assyrians, which would terminate only in the removal of the people to a distant land, and in the destruction of the entire city and nation. But the prophecy in this chapter has not any necessary connection with those which follow, and it may be regarded as separate.

When it was uttered is not certainly known. It is clear, however, that it was before the carrying away of the ten tribes, or while the kingdom of Ephraim or Samaria was still standing. Yet it would seem that it was when that kingdom was exceedingly corrupt, and was hastening to a fall (ver. 1–4). Perhaps it was in the time of Ahaz, or in the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, when Samaria or Ephraim had entered into a league with Rezin, king of Damascus, and may therefore synchronise with ch. vii., viii. Whenever it was uttered, it is certain that its purpose was to predict the overthrow of Ephraim or Samaria, and the fact, that when that kingdom should be overthrown, the kingdom of Judah would still survive.

The prophecy consists of two parts:—1. The overthrow of Samaria or Ephraim (1–4). 2. The fact that JEHOVAH would preserve and defend a portion of his people—those who comprise the kingdom of Judah (5–29). The following brief view will present an analysis of the prophecy:—

I. Ephraim or Samaria, for its sins, particularly for intemperance, would be overthrown (1–4).

II. God would preserve the residue of his people, yet they also deserved rebuke, and would be also subjected to punishment (5–29). 1. He would preserve them (5, 6) and be their glory and strength. 2. Yet they deserved, on many accounts, to be reproved, particularly because many even of the priests and prophets were intemperate (7–8). 3. They also disregarded the messengers of God, and treated their messages with contempt and scorn, as being vain repetitions and a mere stammering (9–13). 4. They regarded themselves as safe, since they were firm and united, and had as it were made a league with death (14, 15). 5. God, in view of their sins, threatens them with deserved punishment (16–22). This would occur in the following manner:—(*a*.) He would lay in Zion a corner stone, tried and precious, and all that regarded that should be safe (16). (*b*.) Yet heavy judgments would come upon the guilty and the unbelieving. Judgment would be laid to the line, and the storms of Divine vengeance would sweep away their false refuges, and their covenant with death should not avail them (17–21). (*c*.) The people are therefore admonished to attend to this, for the destruction was determined upon the whole land (22). (*d*.) The whole account of their punishment is concluded by a reference to the conduct of a husbandman, and an illustration is drawn from the fact that he takes various methods to secure his harvest. He ploughs, he sows, and in various ways he thrashes his grain. So in various ways God would deal with his people. He would instruct, admonish, correct, and punish them, in order that he might secure the *greatest amount of piety and good fruits from them*. Chastisement was just as necessary for them as it was for the husbandman in various modes to beat out his grain (23–29).

WO 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[1] with wine!

[1] broken.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. *Wo* (see Note on ch. xviii. 1). The word here is used to denounce impending judgment. ¶ *To the crown of pride.* This is a Hebrew mode of expression, denoting the *proud or haughty crown*. There can be no doubt that it refers to the capital of the kingdom of Ephraim; that is, to Samaria. This city was built by Omri, who purchased 'the hill Samaria' of Shemer, for two talents of silver, equal in value to £792, 11*s*. 8*d*., and built the city on the hill, and called it, after the name of Shemer, Samaria (1 Kings xvi. 24). Omri was king of Israel (B.C. 925), and he made this city the capital of his kingdom. The city was built on a pleasant and fertile hill, and surrounded with a rich valley, with a circle of hills beyond; and the beauty of the hill on which the city was built suggested the idea of a wreath or chaplet of flowers, or a *crown*. After having been destroyed and reduced to an inconsiderable place, it was restored by Herod the Great, B.C. 21, who called it *Sebaste* (Latin, *Augusta*), in honour of the Emperor Augustus. It is usually mentioned by travellers under the name of Sebaste. Maundrell (*Travels*, p. 58) says, '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 it.' The following is the account which is given by Richardson:—'Its situation

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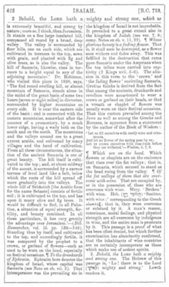

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2 Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as

is extremely beautiful, and strong by nature; more so, I think, than Jerusalem. It stands on a fine large insulated hill, compassed all round by a broad, deep valley. The valley is surrounded by four hills, one on each side, which are cultivated in terraces to the top, sown with grain, and planted with fig and olive trees, as is also the valley. The hill of Samaria, likewise, rises in terraces to a height equal to any of the adjoining mountains.' Dr. Robinson, who visited this place in 1838, says, 'The fine round swelling hill, or almost mountain of Samaria, stands alone in the midst of the great basin of some two hours [seven or eight miles] in diameter, surrounded by higher mountains on every side. It is near the eastern side of the basin; and is connected with the eastern mountains, somewhat after the manner of a promontory, by a much lower ridge, having a wady both on the south and on the north. The mountains and the valleys around are to a great extent arable, and enlivened by many villages and the hand of cultivation. From all these circumstances, the situation of the ancient Samaria is one of great beauty. The hill itself is cultivated to the top; and, at about midway of the ascent, is surrounded by a narrow terrace of level land like a belt, below which the roots of the hill spread off more gradually into the valleys. The whole hill of Sebŭstieh [the Arabic form for the name Sebaste] consists of fertile soil; it is cultivated to the top, and has upon it many olive and fig trees. It would be difficult to find, in all Palestine, a situation of equal strength, fertility, and beauty combined. In all these particulars, it has very greatly the advantage over Jerusalem.'—(*Bib. Researches*, vol. iii. pp. 136—149). Standing thus by itself, and cultivated to the top, and exceedingly fertile, it was compared by the prophet to a crown, or garland of flowers—such as used to be worn on the head, especially on festival occasions. ¶ *To the drunkards of Ephraim.* Ephraim here denotes the kingdom of Israel, whose capital was Samaria (see Note on ch. vii. 2). That intemperance was the prevailing sin in the kingdom of Israel is not improbable. It prevailed to a great extent also in the kingdom of Judah (see ver. 7, 8; comp. Notes on ch. v. 11, 22). ¶ *Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower.* That is, it shall soon be destroyed, as a flower soon withers and fades away. This was fulfilled in the destruction that came upon Samaria under the Assyrians when the ten tribes were carried into captivity (2 Kings xvii. 3–6). The allusion in this verse to the 'crown' and 'the fading flower' encircling Samaria, Grotius thinks is derived from the fact that among the ancients, drunkards and revellers were accustomed to wear a crown or garland on their heads, or that a wreath or chaplet of flowers was usually worn on their festival occasions. That this custom prevailed among the Jews as well as among the Greeks and Romans, is apparent from a statement by the author of the Book of Wisdom:

'Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments,
And let no flower of the spring pass by us;
Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered.'—*Wisdom*, ii. 7, 8.

¶ *Which are on the head.* Which flowers or chaplets are on the eminence that rises over the fat valleys; that is, on Samaria, which seemed to stand as the head rising from the valley. ¶ *Of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine.* That are occupied by, or in the possession of, those who are overcome with wine. Marg. 'Broken' with wine. Heb. ([illegible]) 'Smitten with wine;' corresponding to the Greek [illegible]; that is, they were overcome or subdued by it. A man's reason, conscience, moral feelings, and physical strength are all overcome by indulgence in wine, and the entire man is prostrate by it. This passage is a proof of what has been often denied, but which further examination has abundantly confirmed, that the inhabitants of wine countries are as certainly intemperate as those which make use of ardent spirits.

2. *Behold, the* LORD *hath a mighty and strong one.* The Hebrew of this passage is, 'Lo! there is to the Lord ([illegible]) mighty and strong.' Lowth renders it,

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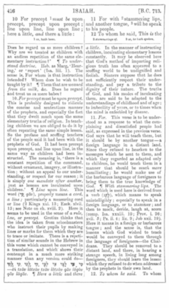

426 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

10 For precept [1] *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:

11 For with [2] stammering lips, and another tongue, [3] will he speak to his people.

12 To whom he said, This *is* the

[1] or, hath been. [2] stammerings of. [3] or, he hath spoken.

Does he regard us as mere children? Why are we treated as children with an endless repetition of the same elementary instruction?' ¶ *To understand doctrine.* Heb. as Marg. 'Hearing,' or 'report' (Isa. liii. 1). The sense is, For whom is that instruction intended? Whom does he wish to be taught by it? ¶ *Them that are weaned from the milk,* &c. Does he regard and treat us as mere babes?

10. *For precept* must be *upon precept.* This is probably designed to ridicule the concise and sententious manner of the prophets, and especially the fact that they dwelt much upon the same elementary truths of religion. In teaching children we are obliged to do it by often repeating the same simple lesson. So the profane and scoffing teachers of the people said it had been with the prophets of God. It had been precept upon precept, and line upon line, in the same way as children had been instructed. The meaning is, 'there is a constant repetition of the command, without ornament, imagery, or illustration; without an appeal to our understanding, or respect for our reason; it is simply *one mandate after another,* just as lessons are inculcated upon children.' ¶ *Line upon line.* This word (קַו qâv), properly means *a cord, a line;* particularly a measuring cord or line (2 Kings xxi. 13; Ezek. xlvii. 13; see Note on ch. xviii. 2). Here it seems to be used in the sense of *a rule, line, or precept.* Grotius thinks that the idea is taken from schoolmasters who instruct their pupils by making lines or marks for them which they are to trace or imitate. There is a repetition of similar sounds in the Hebrew in this verse which cannot be conveyed in a translation, and which shows their contempt in a much more striking manner than any version could do—כִּי צַו לָצָו צַו לָצָו קַו לָקָו קַו לָקָו—*Ki tsâv lâtsâv tsâv lâtsâv qâv lâqâv qâv lâqâv.* ¶ *Here a little and there a little.* In the manner of instructing children, inculcating elementary lessons constantly. It may be observed here that God's method of imparting religious truth has often appeared to a scoffing world to be undignified and foolish. Sinners suppose that he does not sufficiently respect their understanding, and pay a tribute to the dignity of their nature. The truths of God, and his modes of inculcating them, are said to be adapted to the understandings of childhood and of age; to imbecility of years, or to times when the mind is enfeebled by disease.

11. *For.* This verse is to be understood as a response to what the complaining and dissatisfied people had said, as expressed in the previous verse. God says that he will teach them, but it should be by another tongue—a foreign language in a distant land. Since they refused to hearken to the messages which he sent to them, and which they regarded as adapted only to children, he would teach them in a manner that should be much *more* humiliating; he would make use of the barbarous language of foreigners to bring them to the true knowledge of God. ¶ *With stammering lips.* The word which is used here is derived from a verb (לָעַג), which means to speak unintelligibly; especially to speak in a foreign language, or to stammer; and then to mock, deride, laugh at, scorn (comp. Isa. xxxiii. 19; Prov. i. 26; xvii. 5; Ps. ii. 4; lix. 9; Job xxii. 19). Here it means in a foreign or barbarous tongue; and the sense is, that the lessons which God wished to teach would be conveyed to them through the language of foreigners—the Chaldeans. They should be removed to a distant land, and there, in hearing a strange speech, in living long among foreigners, they should learn the lesson which they refused to do when addressed by the prophets in their own land.

12. *To whom he said.* To whom

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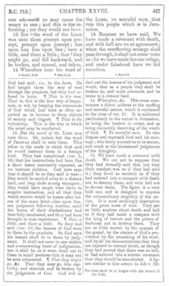

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXVIII. 427

rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing; yet they would not hear.

13 But [a] 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 [b] they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come [c] unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

[a] Ho.6.5, 8.12. [b] Mat.21.44. [c] Am.2.4.

God had said; *i.e.,* to the Jews. He *had* taught them the way of rest through the prophets, but they had refused to learn. ¶ *This is the rest.* That is, this is the true way of happiness, to wit, by keeping the commands of God which had been so often repeated as to become to them objects of satiety and disgust. ¶ *This is the refreshing.* This is the way in which the mind may be comforted.

13. *But the word of the* LORD *was unto them.* Or, rather, but the word of JEHOVAH *shall be* unto them. This refers to the mode in which God said he would instruct them in a foreign land. They had complained (ver. 9, 10) that his instructions had been like a short lesson constantly repeated, as we instruct children. God here says that it should be as they said it was—they would be carried away to a distant land, and long abide among strangers; they would have ample time there to acquire instruction, and all that they would receive would be lesson after lesson of the same kind—line upon line, one judgment following another, until the lesson of their disobedience had been fully inculcated, and they had been brought to true repentance. ¶ *Here a little,* and *there a little.* So they had said (ver. 10) the lessons of God were to them by the prophets. So God says his lessons *shall be* to them by judgment. It shall not come in one sudden and overpowering burst of indignation, but it shall be, as it were, dealt out to them in small portions that it may not be soon exhausted. ¶ *That they might go,* &c. That they may go into captivity, and stumble, and be broken by the judgments of God. God will so deal out the lessons of his judgment and wrath, that as a people they shall be broken up, and made prisoners, and be borne to a distant land.

14. *Wherefore,* &c. This verse commences a direct address to the scoffing and scornful nation, which is continued to the close of ver. 22. It is addressed particularly to the rulers in Jerusalem, as being the leaders in crime, and as being eminently deserving of the wrath of God. ¶ *Ye scornful men.* Ye who despise and reproach God and his message; who fancy yourselves to be secure, and mock at the threatened judgments of the Almighty.

15. *We have made a covenant with death.* We are not to suppose that they had formally said this, but that their conduct was *as if* they had said it; they lived as securely as if they had entered into a compact with death not to destroy them, and with hell not to devour them. The figure is a very bold one, and is designed to express the extraordinary stupidity of the nation. It is most strikingly descriptive of the great mass of men. They are as little anxious about death and hell *as if* they had made a compact with the king of terrors and the prince of darkness not to destroy them. They are as little moved by the appeals of the gospel, by the alarms of God's providence, by the preaching of his word, and by all the demonstrations that they are exposed to eternal death, as though they had proved that there was no hell, or had entered into a solemn covenant that they should be unmolested. A figure similar to this occurs in Job v. 23:

For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;

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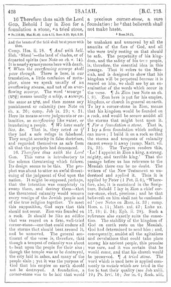

428 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, [a] a tried stone, a precious corner-*stone,* a sure foundation: he [b] that believeth shall not make haste.

[a] Ps.118.22; Mat.21.42; Acts 4.11; Rom.9.33; Eph.2.20. [b] Rom.10.11.

And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Comp. Hos. ii. 18. ¶ *And with hell.* Heb. 'Sheol'—the land of shades, or of departed spirits (see Note on ch. v. 14). It is nearly synonymous here with death. ¶ *When the overflowing scourge shall pass through.* There is here, in our translation, a little confusion of metaphor, since we speak usually of an overflowing *stream,* and not of an overflowing *scourge.* The word 'scourge' (שׁוֹט) means usually *a whip, a scourge,* the same as שַׁיִט, and then means any punishment or calamity (see Note on ch. x. 26; comp. Job ix. 23; v. 21. Here its means severe judgments or calamities, as *overflowing* like water, or inundating a people. ¶ *We have made lies,* &c. That is, they acted *as if* they had a safe refuge in falsehood. They sought security in false doctrines, and regarded themselves as safe from all that the prophets had denounced.

16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord* GOD. This verse is introductory to the solemn threatening which follows. Its design seems to be this. The prophet was about to utter an awful threatening of the judgment of God upon the nation. It might be supposed, perhaps, that the intention was completely to sweep them, and destroy them—that the threatened calamity would remove every vestige of the Jewish people and of the true religion together. To meet this supposition, God says that this should not occur. Zion was founded on a rock. It should be like an edifice that was reared on a firm, well-tried corner-stone—one that could endure all the storms that should beat around it, and be unmoved. The general sentiment of the verse is, therefore, that though a tempest of calamity was about to beat upon the people for their sins; though the temple was to be destroyed, the city laid in ashes, and many of the people slain; yet it was the purpose of God that his empire on earth should not be destroyed. A foundation, a corner-stone was to be laid that would be unshaken and unmoved by all the assaults of the foes of God, and all who were truly resting on that should be safe. The perpetuity of his kingdom, and the safety of his true people, is, therefore, the essential idea in this passage. That it refers to the Messiah, and is designed to show that his kingdom will be perpetual *because* it is reared on him, we shall see by an examination of the words which occur in the verse. ¶ *In Zion* (see Note on ch. i. 8). Zion here is put for his empire, kingdom, or church in general on earth. To lay a corner-stone in Zion, means that his kingdom would be founded on a rock, and would be secure amidst all the storms that might beat upon it. ¶ *For a foundation a stone.* That is, I lay a firm foundation which nothing can move; I build it on a rock so that the storms and tempests of calamity cannot sweep it away (comp. Matt. vii. 24, 25). The Targum renders this, 'Lo! I appoint in Zion a king, a strong, mighty, and terrible king.' That the passage before us has reference to the Messiah there can be no doubt. The writers of the New Testament so understood and applied it. Thus it is applied by Peter (1 Pet. ii. 6), 'Wherefore, also, it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded' (see Notes on Rom. ix. 33; comp. Rom. x. 11; Matt. xxi. 42; Luke xx. 17, 18; ii. 34; Eph. ii. 20). Such a reference also exactly suits the connection. The stability of the kingdom of God on earth rests on the Messiah. God had determined to send him; and, consequently, amidst all the agitations and revolutions that could take place among his ancient people, this promise was sure, and it was certain that he would come, and that his church would be preserved. ¶ *A tried stone.* The word which is used here is applied commonly to *metals* which are tried in the fire to test their quality (see Job xxiii. 10; Ps. lxvi. 10; Jer ix. 6; Zech. xiii.

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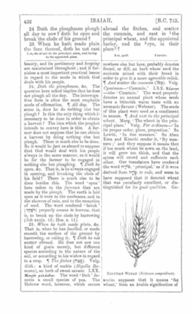

432 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

24 Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in [1] the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the [2] rye, in their place[3]?

[1] or, the wheat in the principal place, and barley in the appointed place.

[2] or, spelt.

[3] border.

beauty, and its pertinency and *keeping* are maintained throughout; and it furnishes a most important practical lesson in regard to the mode in which God deals with his people.

24. *Doth the ploughman*, &c. The question here asked implies that he does *not* plough all the day. The interrogative form is often the most emphatic mode of affirmation. ¶ *All day.* The sense is, does he do nothing else but plough? Is this the only thing which is necessary to be done in order to obtain a harvest? The idea which the prophet intends to convey here is this. A farmer does not suppose that he can obtain a harvest by doing nothing else but plough. There is much else to be done. So it would be just as absurd to suppose that God would deal with his people always in the same manner, as it would be for the farmer to be engaged in nothing else but ploughing. ¶ *Doth he open*, &c. That is, is he always engaged in opening, and breaking the clods of his field? There is much else to be done besides this. The word 'open' here refers to the *furrows* that are made by the plough. The earth is laid open as it were to the sunbeams, and to the showers of rain, and to the reception of seed. The word rendered 'break' (יְשַׂדֵּד) properly means *to harrow*, that is, to break up the clods by harrowing (Job xxxix. 10; Hos. x. 11).

25. *When he hath made plain*, &c. That is, when he has *levelled*, or made smooth the surface of the ground by harrowing, or rolling it. ¶ *Doth he not scatter abroad.* He does not sow one kind of grain merely, but different species according to the nature of the soil, or according to his wishes in regard to a crop. ¶ *The fitches* (קֶצַח). Vulg. *Gith*; a kind of cockle (*Nigella Romana*), an herb of sweet savour. LXX. Μικρὸν μελάνθιον. The word 'fitch' denotes a small species of pea. The Hebrew word, however, which occurs nowhere else but here, probably denotes fennel, or dill, an herb whose seed the ancients mixed with their bread in order to give it a more agreeable relish. ¶ *And scatter the cummin* (כַּמֹּן). Vulg. *Cyminum*—'Cummin.' LXX. Κύμινον—also 'Cummin.' The word properly denotes an annual plant whose seeds have a bitterish warm taste with an aromatic flavour (Webster). The seeds of this plant were used as a condiment in sauces. ¶ *And cast in the principal wheat.* Marg. 'The wheat in the principal place.' Vulg. *Per ordinem*—'In its proper order, place, proportion.' So Lowth, 'In due measure.' So Aben Ezra and Kimchi render it, 'By measure;' and they suppose it means that if too much wheat be sown on the land, it will grow too thick, and that the spires will crowd and suffocate each other. Our translators have rendered the word שׂוֹרָה, 'principal,' as if it were derived from שָׂרַר, *to rule*, and seem to have supposed that it denoted wheat that was peculiarly excellent, or distinguished for its good qualities. Gesenius supposes that it means 'fat wheat,' from an Arabic signification of

Egyptian Wheat (*Triticum compositum*).

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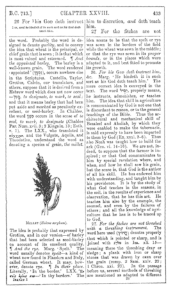

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXVIII. 433

26 For [1] his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

27 For the fitches are not

[1] or, and he bindeth it in such sort as his God doth teach him.

the word. Probably the word is designed to denote *quality*, and to convey the idea that wheat is the principal, or *chief* grain that is sown; it is that which is most valued and esteemed. ¶ *And the appointed barley.* The barley is a well-known grain. The word rendered 'appointed' (נִסְמָן), occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. Castellio, Taylor, Grotius, Calvin, our translators, and others, suppose that it is derived from a Hebrew word which does not now occur—סָמַן, *to designate, to mark, to seal*; and that it means barley that had been put aside and *marked* as peculiarly excellent, or seed-barley. In Chaldee, the word סמן occurs in the sense *of to seal, to mark, to designate* (Chaldee Par. Num. xvii. 3; 2 Kings ix. 13; Esth. v. 1). The LXX., who translated it κέγχρον, and the Vulgate, Aquila, and Theodotion, understand the word as denoting a species of grain, *the millet*.

Millet (*Holcus sorghum*).

The idea is probably that expressed by Grotius, and in our version—*of* barley that had been selected as seed-barley on account of its excellent quality. ¶ *And the rye.* Marg. 'Spelt.' The word usually denotes *spelt*—a kind of wheat now found in Flanders and Italy, called German wheat. It may, however, denote rye. ¶ *In their place.* Literally, 'In the border.' LXX. Ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου—'In thy borders.' The idea seems to be that the spelt or rye was sown in the borders of the field while the wheat was sown in the middle; or that the rye was sown in its *proper bounds*, or in the places which were adapted to it, and best fitted to promote its growth.

26. *For his God doth instruct him*, &c. Marg. 'He bindeth it in such sort as his God doth teach him.' The more correct idea is conveyed in the text. The word יִסְּרוֹ, properly means, he instructs, admonishes, or teaches him. The idea that skill in agriculture is communicated by God is not one that is discordant to reason, or to the general teachings of the Bible. Thus the architectural and mechanical skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab, by which they were enabled to make the tabernacle, is said expressly to have been imparted to them by God (Ex. xxxi. 2–6). Thus also Noah was taught how to build the ark (Gen. vi. 14–16). We are not, indeed, to suppose that the farmer is inspired; or that God communicates to him by special revelation where, and when, and how he shall sow his grain, but the sense is, that God is the author of all his skill. He has endowed him with understanding, and taught him by his providence. It is by the study of what God teaches in the seasons, in the soil, in the results of experience and observation, that he has this art. He teaches him also by the example, the counsel, and even by the failures of others; and all the knowledge of agriculture that he has is to be traced up to God.

27. *For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument.* The word here used (חָרוּץ) denotes properly that which is pointed or sharp, and is joined with מוֹרַג in Isa. xli. 15—meaning there the threshing dray or sledge; a plank with iron or sharp stones that was drawn by oxen over the grain (comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 22; 1 Chron. xxi. 23). In the passage before us, several methods of threshing are mentioned as adapted to different

ISAIAH I. 28

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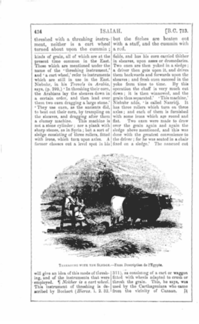

434 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

threshed with a threshing 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.

kinds of grain, all of which are at the present time common in the East. Those which are mentioned under the name of the 'threshing instrument,' and 'a cart wheel,' refer to instruments which are still in use in the East. Niebuhr, in his *Travels in Arabia*, says, (p. 299.) 'In threshing their corn, the Arabians lay the sheaves down in a certain order, and then lead over them two oxen dragging a large stone.' 'They use oxen, as the ancients did, to beat out their corn, by trampling on the sheaves, and dragging after them a clumsy machine. This machine is not a stone cylinder; nor a plank with sharp stones, as in Syria; but a sort of sledge consisting of three rollers, fitted with irons, which turn upon axles. A farmer chooses out a level spot in his fields, and has his corn carried thither in sheaves, upon asses or dromedaries. Two oxen are then yoked in a sledge; a driver then gets upon it, and drives them backwards and forwards upon the sheaves; and fresh oxen succeed in the yoke from time to time. By this operation the chaff is very much cut down; it is then winnowed, and the grain thus separated.' 'This machine,' Niebuhr adds, 'is called Nauridj. It has three rollers which turn on three axles; and each of them is furnished with some irons which are round and flat. Two oxen were made to draw over the grain again and again the sledge above mentioned, and this was done with the greatest convenience to the driver; for he was seated in a chair fixed on a sledge.' The annexed cut will give an idea of this mode of threshing, and of the instruments that were employed. ¶ *Neither is a cart wheel.* This instrument of threshing is described by Bochart (*Hieroz.* i. 2. 32. 311), as consisting of a cart or waggon fitted with wheels adapted to crush or thresh the grain. This, he says, was used by the Carthagenians who came from the vicinity of Canaan. It

Threshing with the Sledge.—From Description de l'Egypte.

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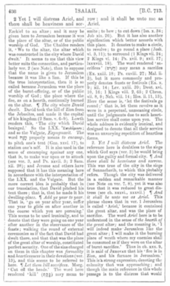

438 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

Ezekiel to an altar; and it may be given here to Jerusalem because it was the place of the altar, or of the public worship of God. The Chaldee renders it, 'Wo to the altar, the altar which was constructed in the city where David dwelt.' It seems to me that this view better suits the connection, and particularly ver. 2 (see Note), than to suppose that the name is given to Jerusalem because it was like a lion. If this be the true interpretation, then it is so called because Jerusalem was the place of the burnt-offering, or of the public worship of God; the place where the fire, as on a hearth, continually burned on the altar. ¶ *The city where David dwelt.* David took the hill of Zion from the Jebusites, and made it the capital of his kingdom (2 Sam. v. 6–9). Lowth renders this, 'The city which David besieged.' So the LXX. Ἐπολέμησε; and so the Vulgate, *Expugnavit.* The word חָנָה properly means *to encamp*, to pitch one's tent (Gen. xxvi. 17), to station one's self. It is also used in the sense of encamping *against* any one, that is, to make war upon or to attack (see ver. 3, and Ps. xxvii. 3; 2 Sam. xii. 28); and Jerome and others have supposed that it has this meaning here in accordance with the interpretation of the LXX. and the Vulgate. But the more correct idea is probably that in our translation, that David pitched his tent there; that is, that he made it his dwelling-place. ¶ *Add ye year to year.* That is, 'go on year after year, suffer one year to glide on after another in the course which you are pursuing.' This seems to be used ironically, and to denote that they were going on one year after another in the observance of the feasts; walking the round of external ceremonies as if the fact that David had dwelt there, and that that was the place of the great altar of worship, constituted perfect security. One of the sins charged on them in this chapter was *formality* and *heartlessness* in their devotions (ver. 13), and this seems to be referred to here. ¶ *Let them kill sacrifices.* Marg. 'Cut off the heads.' The word here rendered 'kill' (נָקַף) may mean to smite; to hew; to cut down (Isa. x. 34; Job xix. 26). But it has also another signification which better accords with this place. It denotes to make a circle, to revolve; to go round a place (Josh. vi. 3, 11); to surround (1 Kings vii. 24; 2 Kings vi. 14; Ps. xvii. 9; xxii. 17; lxxxviii. 18). The word rendered 'sacrifices' (חַגִּים) may mean a sacrifice (Ex. xxiii. 18; Ps. cxviii. 27; Mal. ii. 3), but it more commonly and properly denotes feasts or festivals (Ex. x. 9; xii. 14; Lev. xxiii. 39; Deut. xvi. 10, 16; 1 Kings viii. 2, 65; 2 Chron. vii. 8, 9; Neh. viii. 14; Hos. ii. 11, 13). Here the sense is, 'let the festivals go round;' that is, let them revolve as it were in a perpetual, unmeaning circle, until the judgments due to such heartless service shall come upon you. The whole address is evidently ironical, and designed to denote that all their service was an unvarying repetition of heartless forms.

2. *Yet I will distress Ariel.* The reference here is doubtless to the siege which God says (ver. 3) he would bring upon the guilty and formal city. ¶ *And there shall be heaviness and sorrow.* This was true of the city in the siege of Sennacherib, to which this probably refers. Though the city was delivered in a sudden and remarkable manner (see Note on ver. 7, 8), yet it was also true that it was reduced to great distress (see ch. xxxvi., xxxvii.) ¶ *And it shall be unto me as Ariel.* This phrase shows that in ver. 1 Jerusalem is called 'Ariel,' because it contained the great altar, and was the place of sacrifice. The word *Ariel* here is to be understood in the sense of *the hearth of the great altar;* and the meaning is, 'I will indeed make Jerusalem like the great altar; I will make it the burning place of wrath where my enemies shall be consumed as if they were on the altar of burnt sacrifice.' Thus in ch. xxx. 9, it is said of JEHOVAH that his 'fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.' This is a strong expression, denoting the calamity that was approaching; and though the main reference in this whole passage is to the distress that would

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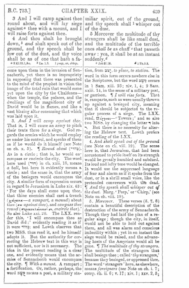

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXIX. 439

3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against[a] thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down,[b] *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 [1] whisper out of the dust.

5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones *shall be* as chaff[c] that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.[d]

a 2 Ki.19.32,&c. b Is.1.9. 1 peep, or, chirp.

c Job 21.18. d 1 Th.5.3.

come upon them in the invasion of Sennacherib, yet there is no impropriety in supposing that there was presented to the mind of the prophet in vision the image of the total ruin that would come yet upon the city by the Chaldeans—when the temple, the palaces, and the dwellings of the magnificent city of David would be in flames, and like a vast blazing altar consuming that which was laid upon it.

3. *And I will camp against thee.* That is, I will cause an army to pitch their tents there for a siege. God regards the armies which he would employ as under his control, and speaks of them as if he would do it himself (see Note on ch. x. 5). ¶ *Round about* (כַּדּוּר). As in a circle; that is, he would encompass or encircle the city. The word here used (דּוּר) in ch. xxii. 18, means *a ball*, but here it evidently means a circle; and the sense is, that the army of the besiegers would encompass the city. A similar form of expression occurs in regard to Jerusalem in Luke xix. 43: 'For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench (χάρακα—*a rampart, a mound*) about thee (σοι *against thee*), and *compass thee round* (περικυκλώσουσί σε, *encircle thee*).' So also Luke xxi. 20. The LXX. render this, 'I will encompass thee as David did;' evidently reading it as if it were כְּדָוִד; and Lowth observes that two MSS. thus read it, and he himself adopts it. But the authority for correcting the Hebrew text in this way is not sufficient, nor is it necessary. The idea in the present reading is a clear one, and evidently means that the armies of Sennacherib would encompass the city. ¶ *With a mount.* A rampart; a fortification. Or, rather, perhaps, the word מֻצָּב means a post, a military station, from נָצַב, *to place, to station.* The word in this form occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures, but the word מַצָּב occurs in 1 Sam. xiii. 23; xiv. 1, 4; 2 Sam. xxiii. 14, in the sense of a military post, or garrison. ¶ *I will raise forts.* That is, ramparts, such as were usually thrown up against a besieged city, meaning that it should be subjected to the regular process of a siege. The LXX. read, Πύργους—'Towers;' and so also two MSS. by changing the letter ר into ד. But there is no necessity for altering the Hebrew text. Lowth prefers the reading of the LXX.

4. And *shalt speak out of the ground* (see Note on ch. viii. 19). The sense here is, that Jerusalem, that had been accustomed to pride itself on its strength would be greatly humbled and subdued. Its loud and lofty tone would be changed. It would use the suppressed language of fear and alarm as if it spoke from the dust, or in a shrill small voice, like the pretended conversers with the dead. ¶ *And thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.* Marg. 'Peep,' or 'Chirp,' (see Note on ch. viii. 19).

5. *Moreover.* These verses (5, 7, 8) contain a beautiful description of the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. Though they had laid the plan of a regular siege; though the city, in itself, would not be able to hold out against them, and all was alarm and conscious imbecility within; yet in an instant the siege would be raised, and the advancing hosts of the Assyrians would all be gone. ¶ *The multitude of thy strangers.* The multitude of the strangers that shall besiege thee; called '*thy* strangers,' because they besieged, or oppressed thee. The word 'strangers' here, as elsewhere, means *foreigners* (see Note on ch. i. 7; comp. ch. ii. 6; v. 17; xiv. 1; xxv. 2, 5;

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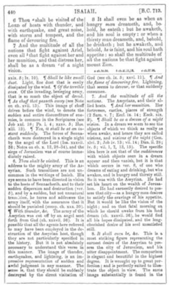

440 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

6 Thou [a] 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.

7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all [b] that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream [c] of a night vision.

8 It shall even be as when an hungry *man* dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or 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.

a ch.30.30. b ch.41.11,12. c ch.37.36.

xxix. 5; lx. 10). ¶ *Shall be like small dust.* Light, fine dust that is easily dissipated by the wind. ¶ *Of the terrible ones.* Of the invading, besieging army, that is so much the object of dread. ¶ *As chaff that passeth away* (see Note on ch. xvii. 13). This image of chaff driven before the wind, to denote the sudden and entire discomfiture of enemies, is common in the Scriptures (see Job xxi. 18; Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Hos. xiii. 13). ¶ *Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.* The forces of Sennacherib were destroyed in a single night by the angel of the Lord (Isa. xxxvii. 36; Notes on ch. x. 12, 28–34), and the siege of Jerusalem was of course immediately raised.

6. *Thou shalt be visited.* This is an address to the mighty army of the Assyrian. Such transitions are not uncommon in the writings of Isaiah. His eye seems to have been directed in vision to the hosts of Sennacherib, and to their sudden dispersion and destruction (ver. 5), and by a sudden, but not unnatural transition, he turns and addresses the army itself, with the assurance that it should be punished (comp. ch. xxx. 30). ¶ *With thunder, &c.* The army of the Assyrian was cut off by an angel sent forth from God (ch. xxxvii. 36). It is *possible* that all the agents here referred to may have been employed in the destruction of the Assyrian host, though they are not particularly specified in the history. But it is not absolutely necessary to understand this verse in this manner. The image of thunder, earthquakes, and lightning, is an impressive representation of sudden and awful judgment in any manner. The sense is, that they should be suddenly destroyed by the direct visitation of God (see ch. ix. 5; xxvi. 11). ¶ *And the flame of devouring fire.* Lightning, that seems to *devour*, or that suddenly consumes.

7. *And the multitude of all the nations.* The Assyrians, and their allied hosts. ¶ *And her munition.* Her fortresses, castles, places of strength (2 Sam. v. 7; Eccl. ix. 14; Ezek. xix. 9). ¶ *Shall be as a dream of a night vision.* In a dream we seem to see the objects of which we think as really as when awake, and hence they are called *visions*, and *visions of the night* (Gen. xlvi. 2; Job iv. 13; vii. 14; Dan. ii. 28; iv. 5; vii. 1, 7, 13, 15). The specific idea here is not that of the *suddenness* with which objects seen in a dream appear and then vanish, but it is that which occurs in ver. 8, of one who dreams of eating and drinking, but who awakes, and is hungry and thirsty still. So it was with the Assyrian. He had set his heart on the wealth of Jerusalem. He had earnestly desired to possess that city—as a hungry man desires to satisfy the cravings of his appetite. But it would be like the vision of the night; and on that fatal morning on which he should awake from his fond dream (ch. xxxvii. 36), he would find all his hopes dissipated, and the long-cherished desire of his soul unsatisfied still.

8. *It shall even be, &c.* This is a most striking figure representing the earnest desire of the Assyrian to possess the city of Jerusalem, and his utter disappointment. The comparison is elegant and beautiful in the highest degree. It is wrought up to great perfection; and is perfectly suited to illustrate the object in view. The same image substantially is found in the

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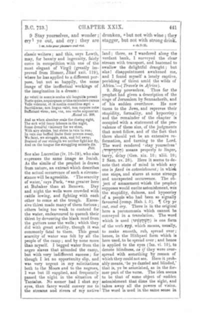

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXIX. 441

9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry[1] ye out, and cry: they are drunken, [a] but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

[1] or, take your pleasure and riot. [a] ch.51.21.

classic writers; and this, says Lowth, may, for beauty and ingenuity, fairly come in competition with one of the most elegant of Virgil (greatly improved from Homer, *Iliad* xxii. 119), where he has applied to a different purpose, but not so happily, the same image of the ineffectual workings of the imagination in a dream:

Ac veluti in somnis oculos ubi languida pressit
Nocte quies, nequicquam avidos extendere cursus
Velle videmur, et in mediis conatibus ægri
Succidimus; non lingua valet, non corpore notæ
Sufficiunt vires; nec, vox, nec verba sequuntur.
Æneid xii. 908.

And as when slumber seals the closing sight,
The sick wild fancy labours in the night,
Some dreadful visionary foe we shun,
With airy strides, but strive in vain to run;
In vain our baffled limbs their powers essay,
We faint, we struggle, sink, and fall away;
Drained of our strength we neither fight nor fly,
And on the tongue the struggling accents die.
Pitt.

See also Lucretius (iv. 10–19), who also expresses the same image as Isaiah. As the simile of the prophet is drawn from nature, an extract which describes the actual occurrence of such a circumstance will be agreeable. 'The scarcity of water,' says Park, 'was greater here at Bubaker than at Benown. Day and night the wells were crowded with cattle lowing, and fighting with each other to come at the trough. Excessive thirst made many of them furious; others being too weak to contend for the water, endeavoured to quench their thirst by devouring the black mud from the gutters near the wells; which they did with great avidity, though it was commonly fatal to them. This great scarcity of water was felt by all the people of the camp; and by none more than myself. I begged water from the negro slaves that attended the camp, but with very indifferent success; for though I let no opportunity slip, and was very urgent in my solicitations both to the Moors and to the negroes, I was but ill supplied, and frequently passed the night in the situation of Tantalus. No sooner had I shut my eyes, than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivers of my native land; there, as I wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught; but alas! disappointment awakened me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst amid the wilds of Africa.'—(*Travels in Africa*).

9. *Stay yourselves.* Thus far the prophet had given a description of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, and of his sudden overthrow. He now turns to the Jews, and reproves their stupidity, formality, and hypocrisy; and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with a statement of the prevalence of these sins, of the judgments that must follow, and of the fact that there should yet be an extensive reformation, and turning to the Lord. The word rendered 'stay yourselves' ([illegible]) means properly *to linger*, tarry, delay (Gen. xix. 16; xliii. 10; 2 Sam. xv. 28). Here it seems to denote that state of mind in which any one is *fixed in astonishment*; in which one stops, and stares at some strange and unexpected occurrence. The object of amazement which the prophet supposes would excite astonishment, was the stupidity, dulness, and hypocrisy of a people who had been so signally favoured (comp. Hab. i. 5). ¶ *Cry ye out, and cry.* There is in the original here a paronomasia which cannot be conveyed in a translation. The word which is used ([illegible]) is one form of the verb [illegible], which means, usually, to make smooth, rub, spread over; hence, in the Hithpael form which is here used, to be spread over; and hence is applied to the eyes (Isa. vi. 10), to denote blindness, *as if* they were overspread with something by reason of which they could not see. Here it probably means, 'be ye dazzled and blinded,' that is, ye be astonished, as in the former part of the verse. The idea seems to be that of some object of sudden astonishment that dims the sight, and takes away all the powers of vision. The word is used in the same sense in

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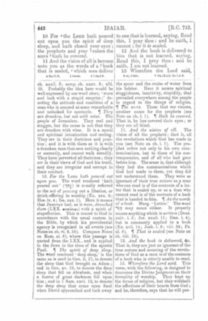

442 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

10 For [a] the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your [1] rulers the seers [b] hath he covered.

11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a [2] book that is sealed, [c] which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed.

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.

13 Wherefore the Lord said,

[a] Ro.11.8. [1] heads. [b] 1 Sa.9.9. [2] or, letter. [c] [illegible]

ch. xxxii. 3; comp. ch. xxxv. 5; xlii. 19. Probably the idea here would be well expressed by our word *stare*, 'stare and look with a stupid surprise;' denoting the attitude and condition of a man who is amazed at some remarkable and unlooked for spectacle. ¶ *They are drunken, but not with wine.* The people of Jerusalem. They reel and stagger, but the cause is not that they are drunken with wine. It is a moral and spiritual intoxication and reeling. They err in their doctrines and practice; and it is with them as it is with a drunken man that sees nothing clearly or correctly, and cannot walk steadily. They have perverted all doctrines; they err in their views of God and his truth, and they are irregular and corrupt in their conduct.

10. *For the* LORD *hath poured out upon you.* The word rendered 'hath poured out' ([illegible]) is usually referred to the act of pouring out a libation, or drink-offering in worship (Ex. xxx. 9; Hos. ix. 4; Isa. xxx. 1). Here it means that JEHOVAH had, as it were, *drenched them* (LXX. [illegible]) with a spirit of stupefaction. This is traced to God in accordance with the usual custom in the Bible, by which his providential agency is recognized in all events (see Notes on ch. vi. 9, 10). Compare Notes on Rom. xi. 8), where this passage is quoted from the LXX., and is applied to the Jews in the time of the apostle Paul. ¶ *The spirit of deep sleep.* The word rendered 'deep sleep,' is the same as is used in Gen. ii. 21, to denote the sleep that God brought on Adam; and in Gen. xv. 12, to denote the deep sleep that fell on Abraham, and when a horror of great darkness fell upon him; and in 1 Sam. xxvi. 12, to denote the deep sleep that came upon Saul when David approached and took away the spear and the cruise of water from his bolster. Here it means spiritual sluggishness, inactivity, stupidity, that prevailed everywhere among the people in regard to the things of religion. ¶ *The seers.* Those that see visions, another name for the prophets (see Note on ch. i. 1). ¶ *Hath he covered.* That is, he has covered their eyes; or they are all blind.

11. *And the vision of all.* The vision of all the prophets; that is, all the revelations which God has made to you (see Note on ch. i. 1). The prophet refers not only to his own communications, but to those of his contemporaries, and of all who had gone before him. The sense is, that although they had the communications which God had made to them, yet they did not understand them. They were as ignorant of their true nature as a man who can read is of the contents of a letter that is sealed up, or as a man who cannot read is of the contents of a book that is handed to him. ¶ *As the words of a book.* Marg. 'Letter.' The word [illegible] may mean either. It properly means anything which is *written* (Deut. xxiv. 1. 3; Jer. xxxii. 11; Dan. i. 4), but is commonly applied to a book (Ex. xvii. 14; Josh. i. 8; viii. 34; Ps. xl. 8). ¶ *That is sealed* (see Note on ch. viii. 16).

12. *And the book is delivered,* &c. That is, they are just as ignorant of the true nature and meaning of the revelations of God as a man is of the contents of a book who is utterly unable to read.

13. *Wherefore the Lord said.* This verse, with the following, is designed to denounce the Divine judgment on their formality of worship. They kept up the forms of religion, but they withheld the affections of their hearts from God; and he, therefore, says that he will pro-

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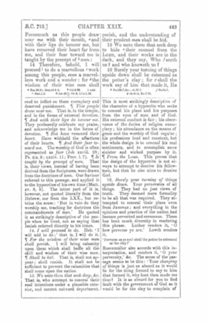

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXIX. 443

Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, [a] 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 [b] men:

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed[1] to do a marvellous [c] work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for [d] the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

15 Wo unto them that seek deep to hide [e] their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who [f] seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for [g] shall the work say of him that made it, He

[a] Eze.33.31; Mat.15.8,9. [b] Col.2.22. [1] add. [c] Hab.1.5. [d] Jer.49.7; Ob.8; 1 Co.1.19. [e] Ps.139.7,&c.; ch.30.1. [f] Ps.94.7. [g] ch.45.9; Ro.9.20.

ceed to inflict on them exemplary and deserved punishment. ¶ *This people draw near me.* That is, in the temple, and in the forms of external devotion. ¶ *And with their lips do honour me.* They professedly celebrate my praise, and acknowledge me in the forms of devotion. ¶ *But have removed their heart.* Have withheld the affections of their hearts. ¶ *And their fear toward me.* The worship of God is often represented as *fear* (Job xxviii. 28; Ps. xix. 9; xxxiv. 11; Prov. i. 7). ¶ *Is taught by the precept of men.* That is, their views, instead of having been derived from the Scriptures, were drawn from the doctrines of men. Our Saviour referred to this passage, and applied it to the hypocrites of his own time (Matt. xv. 8, 9). The latter part of it is, however, not quoted literally from the Hebrew, nor from the LXX., but retains the sense: 'But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' He quoted it as strikingly descriptive of the people when he lived, not as saying that Isaiah referred directly to his times.

14. *I will proceed to do.* Heb. 'I will add to do;' that is, I will do it. ¶ *For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish.* I will bring calamity upon them which shall baffle all the skill and wisdom of their wise men. ¶ *Shall be hid.* That is, shall not appear; shall vanish. It shall not be sufficient to prevent the calamities that shall come upon the nation.

15. *Wo unto them that seek deep,* &c. That is, who attempt to conceal their real intentions under a plausible exterior, and correct outward deportment. This is most strikingly descriptive of the character of a hypocrite who seeks to conceal his plans and his purposes from the eyes of men and of God. His external conduct is fair; his observance of the duties of religion exemplary; his attendance on the means of grace and the worship of God regular; his professions loud and constant, but the whole design *is* to *conceal* his real sentiments, and to accomplish some sinister and wicked purpose by it. ¶ *From the* LORD. This proves that the design of the hypocrite is not always to attempt to deceive his fellow-men, but that he also aims to deceive God.

16. *Surely your turning of things upside down.* Your *perversion* of all things. They had no just views of truth. They deemed mere formality to be all that was required. They attempted to conceal their plans even from JEHOVAH; and everything in the opinions and practice of the nation had become perverted and erroneous. There has been much diversity in rendering this phrase. Luther renders it, 'O how perverse ye are.' Lowth renders it,

'Perverse as ye are! shall the potter be esteemed as the clay?'

Rosenmüller also accords with this interpretation, and renders it, 'O your perversity,' &c. The sense of the passage seems to be this: 'Your *changing of things* is just as absurd as it would be for the thing formed to say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? It is as absurd for you to find fault with the government of God as it would be for the clay to complain of

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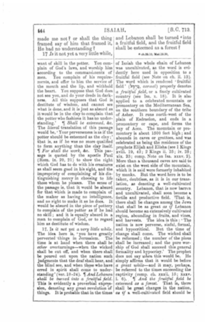

made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

17 *Is* it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned [a] into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

[a] ch.32.15; Mat.19.30.

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want of skill in the potter. You complain of God's laws, and worship him according to the commandments of men. You complain of his requirements, and offer to him the service of the mouth and the lip, and withhold the heart. You suppose that God does not see you, and do your deeds in darkness. All this supposes that God is destitute of wisdom, and cannot see what is done, and it is just as absurd as it would be in the clay to complain that the potter who fashions it has no understanding.' ¶ *Shall be esteemed, &c.* The *literal* translation of this passage would be, 'Your perverseness is as if the potter should be esteemed as the clay;' that is, as if he was no more qualified to form anything than the clay itself. ¶ *For shall the work, &c.* This passage is quoted by the apostle Paul (Rom. ix. 20, 21) to show the right which God has to do with his creatures as shall seem good in his sight, and the impropriety of complaining of his distinguishing mercy in choosing to life those whom he pleases. The sense of the passage is, that it would be absurd for that which is made to complain of the maker as having no intelligence, and no right to make it as he does. It would be absurd in the piece of pottery to complain of the potter as if he had no skill; and it is equally absurd in a man to complain of God, or to regard him as destitute of wisdom.

17. *Is it not yet a very little while.* The idea here is, 'you have greatly perverted things in Jerusalem. The time is at hand when there shall be *other* overturnings—when the wicked shall be cut off, and when there shall be poured out upon the nation such judgments that the deaf shall hear, and the blind see, and when those who have erred in spirit shall come to understanding' (ver. 18–24). ¶ *And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field.* This is evidently a proverbial expression, denoting any great revolution of things. It is probable that in the times of Isaiah the whole chain of Lebanon was uncultivated, as the word is evidently here used in opposition to a fruitful field (see Note on ch. ii. 13). The word which is rendered 'fruitful field' (כַּרְמֶל, *carmel*) properly denotes *a fruitful field*, or a finely cultivated country (see Isa. x. 18). It is also applied to a celebrated mountain or promontory on the Mediterranean Sea, on the southern boundary of the tribe of Asher. It runs north-west of the plain of Esdraelon, and ends in a promontory or cape, and forms the bay of Acco. The mountain or promontory is about 1500 feet high; and abounds in caves or grottoes, and was celebrated as being the residence of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (see 1 Kings xviii. 19, 42; 2 Kings ii. 25; iv. 25; xix. 23; comp. Note on Isa. xxxv. 2). More than a thousand caves are said to exist on the west side of the mountain, which it is said were formerly inhabited by monks. But the word here is to be taken, doubtless, as it is in our translation, as denoting a well-cultivated country. Lebanon, that is now barren and uncultivated, shall soon become a fertile and productive field. That is, there shall be changes among the Jews that shall be as great *as if* Lebanon should become an extensively cultivated region, abounding in fruits, and vines, and harvests. The idea is this: 'The nation is now perverse, sinful, formal, and hypocritical. But the time of change shall come. The wicked shall be reformed; the number of the pious shall be increased; and the pure worship of God shall succeed this general formality and hypocrisy.' The prophet does not say *when* this would be. He simply affirms that it would be before *a great while*—and it may, perhaps, be referred to the times succeeding the captivity (comp. ch. xxxii. 15; xxxv. i. 6). ¶ *And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest.* That is, there shall be great changes in the nation, *as if* a well-cultivated field should be

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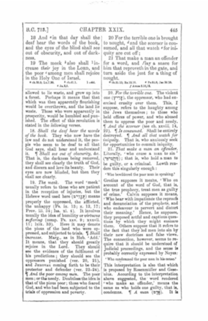

18 And [a] in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek [b] also shall [1] increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor [c] among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, [d] and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch [e] for iniquity are cut off;

21 That make a man an offender for a word, and [f] lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

[a] ch.35.5; Lu.7.22. [b] ch.61.1. [1] add. [c] Ja.2.5.

[d] ch.51.13; Re.12.10. [e] Ps.41.6; Jer.20.10. [f] Amos 5.10,12.

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allowed to lie waste, and grow up into a forest. Perhaps it means that that which was then apparently flourishing would be overthrown, and the land lie waste. Those who were apparently in prosperity, would be humbled and punished. The effect of this revolution is stated in the following verses.

18. *Shall the deaf hear the words of the book.* They who now have the law and do not understand it, the people who seem to be deaf to all that God says, shall hear and understand it. ¶ *Shall see out of obscurity, &c.* That is, the darkness being removed, they shall see clearly the truth of God, and discern and love its beauty. Their eyes are now blinded, but then they shall see clearly.

19. *The meek.* The word 'meek' usually refers to those who are patient in the reception of injuries, but the Hebrew word used here (עֲנָוִים) means properly the oppressed, the afflicted, the unhappy (Ps. ix. 13; x. 12, 17; Prov. iii. 34; Isa. xi. 4). It involves usually the idea of humility or *virtuous suffering* (comp. Ps. xxv. 9; xxxvii. 11; lxix. 33). Here it may denote the pious of the land who were oppressed, and subjected to trials. ¶ *Shall increase.* Marg., as in Heb. 'Add.' It means, that they should greatly rejoice in the Lord. They should see the evidence of the fulfilment of his predictions; they should see the oppressors punished (ver. 20, 21), and JEHOVAH coming forth to be their protector and defender (ver. 22–24). ¶ *And the poor among men.* The poor men; or the needy. Doubtless the idea is that of the pious poor; those who feared God, and who had been subjected to the trials of oppression and poverty.

20. *For the terrible one.* The violent one (עָרִיץ), the oppressor, who had exercised cruelty over them. This, I suppose, refers to the haughty among the Jews themselves; to those who held offices of power, and who abused them to oppress the poor and needy. ¶ *And the scorner* (see ch. xxviii. 14, 22). ¶ *Is consumed.* Shall be entirely destroyed. ¶ *And all that watch for iniquity.* That is, who anxiously seek for opportunities to commit iniquity.

21. *That make a man an offender.* Literally, 'who cause a man to sin' (מַחֲטִיאֵי); that is, who hold a man to be guilty, or a criminal. Lowth renders this singularly enough:

'Who bewildered the poor man in speaking.'

Grotius supposes it means, 'Who on account of the word of God, that is, the true prophecy, treat men as guilty of crime.' Calvin supposes it means, 'Who bear with impatience the reproofs and denunciation of the prophets, and who endeavour to pervert and distort their meaning.' Hence, he supposes, they proposed artful and captious questions by which they might ensnare them. Others suppose that it refers to the fact that they led men into sin by their new doctrines and false views. The connection, however, seems to require that it should be understood of judicial proceedings, and the sense is probably correctly expressed by Noyes:

'Who condemned the poor man in his cause.'

This interpretation is also that which is proposed by Rosenmüller and Gesenius. According to the interpretation above suggested, the word rendered 'who make an offender,' means the same as who holds one guilty, that is, condemns. ¶ *A man* (אָדָם). It is

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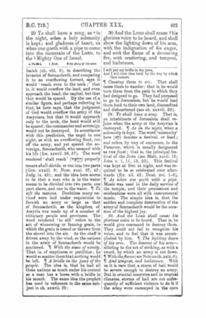

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXX. 461

29 Ye shall have a song, as [a] 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 [1] Mighty One of Israel.

30 And the LORD shall cause [2] his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show 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.

a Ps.42.4. 1 Rock. 2 the glory of his voice.

Isaiah (ch. viii. 8), in describing the invasion of Sennacherib, and comparing it to an overflowing torrent, says it would 'reach even to the neck;' that is, it would overflow the land, and even approach the head, the capital, but that that would be spared. By the use of a similar figure, and perhaps referring to that, he here says, that the judgment of God would overflow the army of the Assyrians, but that it would approach *only* to the neck, the head would still be spared; the commander and sovereign would not be destroyed. In accordance with this prediction, the angel in one night, as with an overflowing flood, cut off the army, and yet spared the sovereign, Sennacherib, who escaped with his life (Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37). The word rendered 'shall reach' (יֶחֱצֶה) properly means *shall divide*, or cut into two parts (Gen. xxxiii. 8; Num. xxxi. 37, 42; Judg. ix. 43); and the idea here seems to be that a man who is in the water seems to be *divided* into two parts, one part above, and one in the water. ¶ *To sift the nations.* Doubtless many nations were laid under requisition to furnish an army so large as that of Sennacherib, as the kingdom of Assyria was made up of a number of tributary people and provinces. The word rendered 'to sift' refers to the act of winnowing or fanning grain, in which the grain is *tossed* or thrown from the shovel into the air. As the chaff is driven away by the wind, so the nations in the army of Sennacherib would be scattered. ¶ *With the sieve of vanity.* That is, of emptiness or perdition; he would so scatter them that nothing would be left. ¶ *A bridle in the jaws of the people.* The idea is, that he had all these nations as much under his control as a man has a horse with a bridle in his mouth. The same idea the prophet has used in reference to the same subject in ch. xxxvii. 29:

I will put my bridle in thy jaws,
And I will turn thee back by the way by which
thou camest.

¶ *Causing them to err.* That shall cause them to wander; that is, he would turn them from the path in which they had designed to go. They had purposed to go to Jerusalem, but he would lead them *back* to their own land, discomfited and disheartened (see ch. xxxvii. 29).

29. *Ye shall have a song.* That is, ye inhabitants of Jerusalem shall rejoice when the army of the Assyrian is destroyed. ¶ *As in the night, when a solemnity is kept.* The word 'solemnity' here (חַג) denotes a festival, or feast; and refers, by way of eminence, to the Passover, which is usually designated as THE *feast;* that is, the principal festival of the Jews (see Matt. xxvii. 15; John v. 1, 11, 13, 23). This festival was kept at first at night, and was required to be so celebrated ever afterwards (Ex. xii. 42; Deut. xvi. 1–6). ¶ *As when one goeth with a pipe.* Music was used in the daily service of the temple, and their processions and celebrations were all with instrumental music. The simple idea is, that the sudden and complete destruction of the army of Sennacherib would be the occasion of the highest joy.

30. *And the* LORD *shall cause his glorious voice to be heard.* That is, he would give command to destroy them. They could not fail to recognize his voice, and to feel that it was accomplished by him. ¶ *The lighting down of his arm.* The descent of his arm—alluding to the act of striking, as with a sword, by which an army is cut down. ¶ With *the flame* (see Note on ch. xxix. 6). ¶ *And tempest, and hailstones.* With us it is rare that a storm of hail would be severe enough to destroy an army. But in oriental countries and in tropical climates, storms of hail are not unfrequently of sufficient violence to do it if the army were encamped in the open

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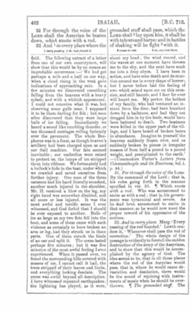

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31 For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, *which* smote with a rod.

32 And [1] *in* every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall [2] lay upon him, *it* shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight [3] with it.

1 every passing of the rod founded. 2 cause to rest. 3 or, against them.

field. The following extract of a letter from one of our own countrymen, will show that this would be by no means an improbable occurrence:—'We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud rising in the west gave indications of approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and with a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some gulls near, I supposed it to be them darting for fish; but soon after discovered that they were large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder, or ten thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosphorus was in a foam, as though heaven's artillery had been charged upon us and our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable; our umbrellas were raised to protect us, the lumps of ice stripped them into ribbons. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of the three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed, another much injured in the shoulder, Mr. H. received a blow on the leg, my right hand was somewhat disabled, and all more or less injured. It was the most awful and terrific scene I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I should be ever exposed to another. Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boat, and some of them came with such violence as certainly to have broken an arm or leg, had they struck us in those parts. One of them struck the blade of an oar and split it. The scene lasted perhaps five minutes; but it was five minutes of the most awful feeling I ever experienced. When it passed over, we found the surrounding hills covered with masses of ice, I cannot call it hail, the trees stripped of their leaves and limbs, and everything looking desolate. The scene was awful beyond all description. I have witnessed repeated earthquakes; the lightning has played, as it were, about my head; the wind roared, and the waves at one moment have thrown me to the sky, and the next have sunk me into a deep abyss. I have been in action, and have seen death and destruction around me in every shape of horror; but I never before had the feeling of awe which seized upon me on this occasion, and still haunts, and I fear for ever will haunt me. My porter, the boldest of my family, who had ventured an instant from the door, had been knocked down by a hailstone, and had they not dragged him in by the heels, would have been battered to death. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village, and I have heard of broken bones in abundance. Imagine to yourself the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the earth.'—(Commodore Porter's *Letters from Constantinople and its Environs*, vol. i. p. 44.)

31. *For through the voice of the* LORD. By the command of the Lord; that is, his voice going forth in the manner specified in ver. 30. ¶ Which *smote with a rod.* Who was accustomed to smite as with a rod; that is, his government was tyrannical and severe. As he had been accustomed to smite in that manner, so he would now meet the proper reward of his oppression of the nations.

32. *And in every place.* Marg. 'Every passing of the rod founded.' Lowth renders it, 'Whenever shall pass the rod of correction.' The whole design of the passage is evidently to foretell the sudden destruction of the army of the Assyrians, and to show that this would be accomplished by the agency of God. The idea seems to be, that in all those places where the rod of the Assyrian would pass, that is, where he would cause devastation and desolation, there would be the sound of rejoicing with instruments of music when he should be overthrown. ¶ *The grounded staff.* The

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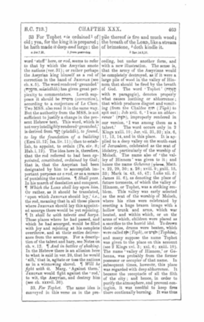

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXX. 463

33 For Tophet [a] *is* ordained [1] of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep *and* large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, [b] doth kindle it.

a Jer.7.31. 1 from yesterday. b Rev.14.9,10.

word 'staff' here, or *rod*, seems to refer to that by which the Assyrian smote the nations (ver. 31); or rather perhaps the Assyrian king himself as a rod of correction in the hand of JEHOVAH (see ch. x. 5). The word rendered 'grounded' (מוּסָדָה, *mûsâdhâh*) has given great perplexity to commentators. Lowth supposes it should be מוּסָרָה (*correction*), according to a conjecture of Le Clerc. Two MSS. also read it in the same way. But the authority from the MSS. is not sufficient to justify a change in the present Hebrew text. This word, which is not very intelligibly rendered 'grounded,' is derived from יָסַד (*yâsădh*), *to found, to lay the foundation of a building* (Ezra iii. 12; Isa. liv. 11); then to establish, to appoint, to ordain (Ps. civ. 8; Hab. i. 12). The idea here is, therefore, that the rod referred to had been *appointed, constituted, ordained* by God; that is, that the Assyrian had been designated by him to accomplish important purposes *as a rod*, or as a means of punishing the nations. ¶ *Shall pass.* In his march of desolation and conquest. ¶ *Which the* LORD *shall lay upon him.* Or rather, as it should be translated, 'upon which JEHOVAH should lay,' *i.e.*, the rod, meaning that in all those places where JEHOVAH should lay this appointed scourge there would be yet rejoicing. ¶ It *shall be with tabrets and harps.* Those places where he had passed, and which he had scourged, would be filled with joy and rejoicing at his complete overthrow, and at their entire deliverance from the scourge. For a description of the tabret and harp, see Notes on ch. v. 12. ¶ *And in battles of shaking.* In the Hebrew there is an allusion here to what is said in ver. 28, that he would 'sift,' that is, agitate or toss the nations as in a winnowing shovel. ¶ *Will he fight with it.* Marg. 'Against them.' JEHOVAH would fight against the 'rod,' to wit, the Assyrian, and destroy him (see ch. xxxvii. 36).

33. *For Tophet.* The same idea is conveyed in this verse as in the preceding, but under another form, and with a new illustration. The sense is, that the army of the Assyrians would be completely destroyed, as if it were a large pile of wood in the valley of Hinnom that should be fired by the breath of God. The word 'Tophet' (תָּפְתֶּה with ה paragogic), denotes properly what causes loathing or abhorrence; that which produces disgust and vomiting (from the Chaldee תּוּף (*Tûph*) to spit out); Job xvii. 6, 'I was an *abhorrence*' (תֹּפֶת), improperly rendered in our version, 'I was among them as a tabret.' The word occurs only in 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 6, 11, 13, 14, and in this place. It is applied to a deep valley on the south-east of Jerusalem, celebrated as the seat of idolatry, particularly of the worship of Moloch. The name also of 'the valley of Hinnom' was given to it; and hence the name *Gehenna* (γέεννα, Matt. v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; Luke xii. 5; James iii. 6), as denoting the place of future torments, of which the valley of Hinnom, or Tophet, was a striking emblem. This valley was early selected as the seat of the worship of Moloch, where his rites were celebrated by erecting a huge brazen image with a hollow trunk and arms, which was heated, and within which, or on the arms of which, children were placed as a sacrifice to the horrid idol. To drown their cries, drums were beaten, which were called תֹּף (*Toph*), or תֻּפִּים (*Tophim*), and many suppose the name Tophet was given to the place on this account (see 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 6; xxiii. 10). The name 'valley of Hinnom,' or Gehenna, was probably from the former possessor or occupier of that name. In subsequent times, however, this place was regarded with deep abhorrence. It became the receptacle of all the filth of the city; and hence, in order to purify the atmosphere, and prevent contagion, it was needful to keep fires there continually burning. It was thus

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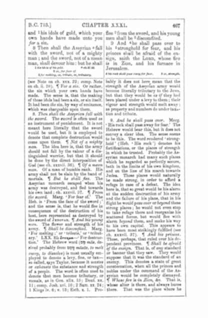

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXXI. 467

and [1] his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you *for* a sin.

8 Then shall the Assyrian [a] fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee [2] from the sword, and his young men shall be [3] discomfited.

9 And [4] he shall pass over to his [5] stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire *is* in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

[1] the idols of his gold. [a] ch.37.36. [2] or, for fear of. [3] for melting, or, tribute, or, tributary. [4] his rock shall pass away for fear. [5] or, strength.

(see Note on ch. xxx. 22; comp. Note on ch. ii. 20). ¶ *For a sin.* Or rather, the sin which your own hands have made. The sense is, that the making of those idols had been a sin, or sin itself. It had been *the* sin, by way of eminence, which was chargeable upon them.

8. *Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword.* The *sword* is often used as an instrument of punishment. It is not meant here literally that the sword would be used, but it is employed to denote that complete destruction would come upon them. ¶ *Not of a mighty man.* The idea here is, that the army should not fall by the valour of a distinguished warrior, but that it should be done by the direct interposition of God (see ch. xxxvii. 36). ¶ *Of a mean man.* Of a man of humble rank. His army shall not be slain by the band of mortals. ¶ *But he shall flee.* The Assyrian monarch escaped when his army was destroyed, and fled towards his own land; ch. xxxvii. 37. ¶ *From the sword.* Marg. 'For fear of.' The Heb. is 'From the face of the sword;' and the sense is, that he would flee in consequence of the destruction of his host, here represented as destroyed by the sword of JEHOVAH. ¶ *And his young men.* The flower and strength of his army. ¶ *Shall be discomfited.* Marg. 'For melting;' or 'tribute,' or 'tributary.' LXX. Εἰς ἥττημα—'For destruction.' The Hebrew word (מַס *mas*, derived probably from מָסַס *masas*, *to melt away, to dissolve*) is most usually employed to denote a levy, fine, or tax—so called, says Taylor, because it *wastes* or *exhausts* the substance and strength of a people. The word is often used to denote that men become tributary, or vassals, as in Gen. xlix. 15; Deut. xx. 11; comp. Josh. xvi. 10; 2 Sam. xx. 24; 1 Kings iv. 6; v. 13; Esth. x. 1. Probably it does not here mean that the strength of the Assyrian army would become literally tributary to the Jews, but that they would be *as if* they had been placed under a levy to them; their vigour and strength would melt away; as property and numbers do under taxation and tribute.

9. *And he shall pass over.* Marg. 'His rock shall pass away for fear.' The Hebrew would bear this, but it does not convey a clear idea. The sense seems to be this. The word rendered 'stronghold' (Heb. 'His rock') denotes his fortifications, or the places of strength in which he trusted. Probably the Assyrian monarch had many such places which he regarded as perfectly secure, both in the limits of his own kingdom, and on the line of his march towards Judea. Those places would naturally be made strong, in order to afford a refuge in case of a defeat. The idea here is, that so great would be his alarm at the sudden destruction of his army and the failure of his plans, that in his flight he would *pass over* or *beyond* these strong places; he would not even stop to take refuge there and reorganise his scattered forces, but would flee with alarm *beyond* them, and make his way to his own capital. This appears to have been most strikingly fulfilled (see ch. xxxvii. 37). ¶ *And his princes.* Those, perhaps, that ruled over his dependent provinces. ¶ *Shall be afraid of the ensign.* That is, of *any* standard or banner that they saw. They would suppose that it was the standard of an enemy. This denotes a state of great consternation, when all the princes and nobles under the command of the Assyrian would be completely dismayed. ¶ *Whose fire is in Zion, &c.* That is, whose altar is there, and always burns there. That was the place where he

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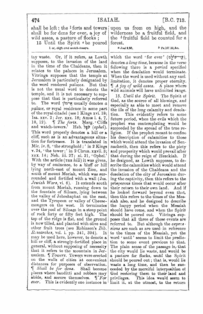

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shall be left: the [1] forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

15 Until the Spirit [a] be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the [b] fruitful field be counted for a forest.

[1] or, cliffs and watch-towers.

[a] Joel 2.28.

[b] Ps.107.35,&c.

lay waste. Or, if it refers, as Lowth supposes, to the invasion of the land in the time of the Chaldeans, then it relates to the palaces in Jerusalem. Vitringa supposes that the temple at Jerusalem is particularly designated by the word rendered *palaces*. But that is not the usual word to denote the temple, and it is not necessary to suppose that that is particularly referred to. The word אַרְמוֹן usually denotes a *palace*, or royal residence in some part of the royal citadel (see 1 Kings xvi. 18; Isa. xxv. 2; Jer. xxx. 18; Amos i. 4, 7, 10, 12). ¶ *The forts.* Marg. 'Cliffs and watch-towers.' Heb. עֹפֶל (*ophel*). This word properly denotes a hill or a cliff, such as is an advantageous situation for fortresses. It is translated in Mic. iv. 8, 'the stronghold;' in 2 Kings v. 24, 'the tower;' in 2 Chron. xxvii. 3; xxx. 14; Neh. iii. 27; xi. 21, 'Ophel.' With the article (THE *hill*) it was given, by way of eminence, to a bluff or hill lying north-east of mount Zion, and south of mount Moriah, which was surrounded and fortified with a wall (Jos. *Jewish Wars*, vi. 6). It extends south from mount Moriah, running down to the fountain of Siloam, lying between the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east, and the Tyropeon or valley of Cheesemongers on the west. It terminates over the pool of Siloam in a steep point of rock forty or fifty feet high. The top of the ridge is flat, and the ground is now tilled, and planted with olive and other fruit trees (see Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. i. pp. 341, 394). It may be used here, however, to denote a hill or cliff, a strongly-fortified place in general, without supposing of necessity that it refers to the mountain in Jerusalem. ¶ *Towers.* Towers were erected on the walls of cities at convenient distances for purposes of observation. ¶ *Shall be for dens.* Shall become places where banditti and robbers may abide, and secure themselves. ¶ *For ever.* This is evidently one instance in which the word 'for ever' (עַד־עוֹלָם), denotes *a long time*, because in the verse following there is a *period* specified when the desolation would terminate. When the word is used without any such limitation, it denotes proper eternity. ¶ *A joy of wild asses.* A place where wild animals will have unlimited range.

15. *Until the Spirit.* The Spirit of God, as the source of all blessings, and especially as able to meet and remove the ills of the long calamity and desolation. This evidently refers to some future period, when the evils which the prophet was contemplating would be succeeded by the spread of the true religion. If the prophet meant to confine his description of calamities to those which would attend the invasion of Sennacherib, then this refers to the piety and prosperity which would prevail after that during the reign of Hezekiah. If he designed, as Lowth supposes, to describe the calamities which would attend the invasion of the Chaldeans and the desolation of the city of Jerusalem during the captivity, then this refers to the prosperous times that would occur after their return to their own land. And if he looked forward beyond even that, then this refers to the times of the Messiah also, and he designed to describe the happy period when the Messiah should have come, and when the Spirit should be poured out. Vitringa supposes that all three of these events are referred to. But although the *expressions* are such as are used in reference to the times of the Messiah, yet the word 'until' seems to limit the prediction to some event previous to that. The plain sense of the passage is, that the city would lie waste, and would be a pasture for flocks, *until* the Spirit should be poured out; that is, would lie waste a long time, and then be succeeded by the merciful interposition of God restoring them to their land and privileges. This idea would seem to limit it, at the utmost, to the return

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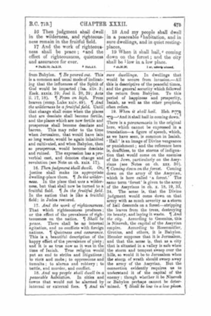

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16 Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; [a] and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable [b] habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places,

19 When it shall hail, [c] coming down on the forest; and the city shall be [1] low in a low place.

[a] Ps.85.10; Ja.3.18.

[b] Heb.4.9.

[c] ch.30.30.

[1] or, utterly abased.

from Babylon. ¶ *Be poured out.* This is a common and usual mode of indicating that the influences of the Spirit of God would be imparted (Isa. xliv. 3; Ezek. xxxix. 29; Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17, 18). ¶ *From on high.* From heaven (comp. Luke xxiv. 49). ¶ *And the wilderness be a fruitful field.* Until that change shall come when the places that are desolate shall become fertile, and the places which are now fertile and prosperous shall become desolate and barren. This may refer to the time when Jerusalem, that would have lain so long waste, would be again inhabited and cultivated, and when Babylon, then so prosperous, would become desolate and ruined. The expression has a proverbial cast, and denotes change and revolution (see Note on ch. xxix. 17).

16. *Then judgment shall dwell.* Or, justice shall make its appropriate dwelling-place there. ¶ *In the wilderness.* In the place that *was* a wilderness, but that shall now be turned to a fruitful field. ¶ *In the fruitful field.* In the nation that is like a fruitful field; in Judea restored.

17. *And the work of righteousness.* That which righteousness produces; or the effect of the prevalence of righteousness on the nation. ¶ *Shall be peace.* There shall be no internal agitation, and no conflicts with foreign nations. ¶ *Quietness and assurance.* This is a beautiful description of the happy effect of the prevalence of piety; and it is as true now as it was in the time of Isaiah. True religion would put an end to strifes and litigations; to riots and mobs; to oppressions and tumults; to alarms and robbery; to battle, and murder, and conflict.

18. *And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation.* In cities and towns that would not be alarmed by internal or external foes. ¶ *And in sure dwellings.* In dwellings that would be secure from invasion.—All this is descriptive of the peaceful times, and the general security which followed the return from Babylon. To this period of happiness and prosperity, Isaiah, as well as the other prophets, often refers.

19. *When it shall hail.* Heb. וּבָרַד בְּרֶדֶת—'And it shall hail in coming down.' There is a *paronomasia* in the original here, which cannot be expressed in a translation—a figure of speech, which, as we have seen, is common in Isaiah. 'Hail' is an image of Divine vengeance or punishment; and the reference here is, doubtless, to the storms of indignation that would come on the enemies of the Jews, particularly on the Assyrians (see Notes on ch. xxx. 30). ¶ *Coming down on the forest.* Coming down on the army of the Assyrian, which is here called 'a forest.' The same term 'forest' is given to the army of the Assyrians in ch. x. 18, 19, 33, 34. The sense is, that the Divine judgment would come down on that army with as much severity as a storm of hail descends on a forest—stripping the leaves from the trees, destroying its beauty, and laying it waste. ¶ *And the city.* According to Gesenius, this is Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. According to Rosenmüller, Grotius, and others, it is Babylon. Hensler supposes that it is Jerusalem, and that the sense is, that as a city that is situated in a valley is safe when the storm and tempest sweep over the hills, so would it be to Jerusalem when the storm of wrath should sweep away the army of the Assyrian. But the connection evidently requires us to understand it of the capital of the enemy; though whether it be Nineveh or Babylon perhaps cannot be determined. ¶ *Shall be low in a low place.*

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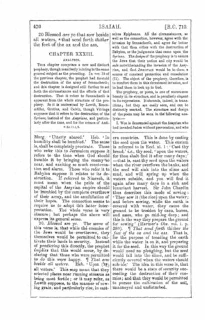

20 Blessed *are* ye that sow beside all waters, [a] that send forth *thither* the feet of the ox and the ass.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ANALYSIS.

THIS chapter comprises a new and distinct prophecy, though manifestly relating to the same general subject as the preceding. In ver. 19 of the previous chapter, the prophet had foretold the destruction of the army of Sennacherib; and this chapter is designed still further to set forth the circumstances and the effects of that destruction. That it refers to Sennacherib is apparent from the whole structure of the prophecy. So it is understood by Lowth, Rosenmüller, Grotius, and Calvin, though Vitringa supposes that it refers to the destruction of the *Syrians*, instead of the *Assyrians*, and particularly after the time, and for the crimes of Antiochus Epiphanes. All the circumstances, as well as the connection, however, agree with the invasion by Sennacherib, and agree far better with that than either with the destruction of Babylon, or the judgments that came upon the *Syrians*. The *design* of the prophecy is to assure the Jews that their nation and city would be safe notwithstanding the invasion of the Assyrian, and that JEHOVAH would be to them a source of constant protection and consolation (21). The object of the prophecy, therefore, is to comfort them in this threatened invasion, and to lead them to look up to God.

The prophecy, or poem, is one of uncommon beauty in its structure, and is peculiarly elegant in its expressions. It abounds, indeed, in transitions; but they are easily seen, and can be distinctly marked. The structure and design of the poem may be seen in the following analysis:—

I. Woe is denounced against the Assyrian who had invaded Judea without provocation, and who

[a] Ec 11.1,6.

Marg. 'Utterly abased.' Heb. 'In humility shall be humbled.' The sense is, shall be completely prostrate. Those who refer this to *Jerusalem* suppose it refers to the time when God should humble it by bringing the enemy so near, and exciting so much consternation and alarm. Those who refer it to Babylon suppose it relates to its destruction. If referred to Nineveh, it must mean when the pride of the capital of the Assyrian empire should be humbled by the complete overthrow of their army, and the annihilation of their hopes. The connection seems to require us to adopt this latter interpretation. The whole verse is very obscure; but perhaps the above will express its general sense.

20. *Blessed* are *ye*. The sense of this verse is, that while the enemies of the Jews would be overthrown, they themselves would be permitted to cultivate their lands in security. Instead of *predicting* this directly, the prophet *implies* that this would occur, by declaring that those who were permitted *to do* this were happy. ¶ *That sow beside all waters.* Heb. 'Upon (עַל) all waters.' This may mean that they selected places near running streams as being most fertile; or it may refer, as Lowth supposes, to the manner of sowing grain, and particularly rice, in eastern countries. This is done by casting the seed upon the water. This custom is referred to in Eccl. xi. 1: 'Cast thy bread,' *i.e.*, thy seed, 'upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days;'—that is, cast thy seed upon the waters when the river overflows the banks, and the seed will sink into the slime and mud, and will spring up when the waters subside, and you will find it again after many days in a rich and luxuriant harvest. Sir John Chardin thus describes this mode of sowing: 'They sow it (the rice) upon the water; and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, who go mid-leg deep; and this is the way they prepare the ground for sowing' (Harmer's *Obs.* vol. i. p. 280). ¶ *That send forth* thither *the feet of the ox and the ass.* That is, for the purpose of treading the earth while the water is on it, and preparing it for the seed. In this way the ground would need no ploughing, but the seed would fall into the slime, and be sufficiently covered when the waters should subside. The idea in this verse is, that there would be a state of security succeeding the destruction of their enemies; and that they would be permitted to pursue the cultivation of the soil, unannoyed and undisturbed.

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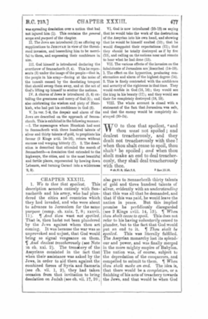

was spreading desolation over a nation that had not injured him (1). This contains the *general* scope and *purport* of the chapter.

II. The Jews are introduced (2) as offering up supplications to JEHOVAH in view of the threatened invasion, and beseeching him to be merciful to them, and expressing their confidence in him.

III. God himself is introduced declaring the overthrow of Sennacherib (3, 4). This he represents (3) under the image of the people—that is, the people in his army—fleeing at the noise of the tumult caused by the desolating tempest that should sweep them away, and at the act of God's lifting up himself to scatter the nations.

IV. A chorus of Jews is introduced (5, 6) extolling the greatness and mercy of God (5); and also celebrating the wisdom and piety of Hezekiah, who had put his confidence in God (6).

V. In ver. 7-9, the despair and alarm of the Jews are described on the approach of Sennacherib. This is exhibited in the following manner:—1. The messengers whom Hezekiah had sent to Sennacherib with three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold, to propitiate his favour (2 Kings xviii. 14-16), return without success and weeping bitterly (7). 2. The desolation is described that attended the march of Sennacherib—a desolation that extended to the highways, the cities, and to the most beautiful and fertile places, represented by hewing down Lebanon, and turning Carmel into a wilderness (8, 9).

VI. God is now introduced (10-13) as saying that he would take the work of the destruction of the Assyrian into his own hand, and showing that he would be himself exalted (10); that he would disappoint their expectations (11); that they should be totally destroyed as if by fire (12), and calling on the nations near and remote to hear what he had done (13).

VII. The various effects of the invasion on the inhabitants of Jerusalem are described (14-19). 1. The effect on the hypocrites, producing consternation and alarm of the highest degree (14). 2. This is finely contrasted with the confidence and security of the righteous in that time. They would confide in God (15, 16); they would see the king in his beauty (17); and they would see their foe completely destroyed (18, 19).

VIII. The whole account is closed with a statement of the fact that Jerusalem was safe, and that the enemy would be completely destroyed (20-24).

WO to thee that spoilest, [a] and thou *wast* not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt [b] be spoiled; *and* when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

[a] ch.21.2; Hab.2.8. [b] Rev.13.10.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. *Wo to thee that spoilest.* This description accords entirely with Sennacherib and his army, who had plundered the cities and countries which they had invaded, and who were about to advance to Jerusalem *for* the same purpose (comp. ch. xxix. 7, 8; xxxvii. 11). ¶ *And thou wast not spoiled.* That is, thou hadst not been plundered by the Jews against whom thou art coming. It was because the war was so unprovoked and unjust, that God would bring so signal vengeance on them. ¶ *And dealest treacherously* (see Note on ch. xxi. 2). The treachery of the Assyrians consisted in the fact that when their assistance was asked by the Jews, in order to aid them against the combined forces of Syria and Samaria (see ch. vii. 1, 2), they had taken occasion from that invitation to bring desolation on Judah (see ch. vii. 17, 20; also gave to Sennacherib thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver, evidently with an *understanding* that this was all that he demanded, and that if this was paid, he would leave the nation in peace. But this implied promise he perfidiously disregarded (see 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15). ¶ *When thou shalt cease to spoil.* This does not refer to his having *voluntarily* ceased to plunder, but to the fact that God would put an end to it. ¶ *Thou shalt be spoiled.* This was literally fulfilled. The Assyrian monarchy lost its splendour and power, and was finally merged in the more mighty empire of Babylon. The nation was, of course, subject to the depredation of the conquerors, and compelled to submit to them. ¶ *When thou shalt make an end.* The idea is, that there would be a *completion*, or a finishing of his acts of treachery towards the Jews, and that would be when God

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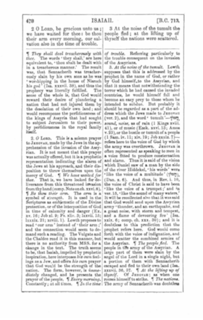

2 O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.

3 At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered.

¶ *They shall deal treacherously with thee.* The words 'they shall,' are here equivalent to, 'thou shalt be dealt with in a treacherous manner.' The result was, that Sennacherib was treacherously slain by his own sons as he was 'worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god' (Isa. xxxvii. 38), and thus the prophecy was literally fulfilled. The sense of the whole is, that God would reward their desire of plundering a nation that had not injured them by the desolation of their own land; and would recompense the perfidiousness of the kings of Assyria that had sought to subject Jerusalem to their power, by perfidiousness in the royal family itself.

2. *O* LORD. This is a solemn prayer to JEHOVAH, made by the Jews in the apprehension of the invasion of the Assyrian. It is not meant that this prayer was actually offered, but it is a prophetic representation indicating the alarm of the Jews at his approach, and their disposition to throw themselves upon the mercy of God. ¶ *We have waited for thee.* That is, we have looked for deliverance from this threatened invasion from thy hand (comp. Note on ch. xxvi. 8). ¶ *Be thou their arm.* The *arm* is a symbol of *strength*. It is used in the Scriptures as emblematic of the Divine protection, or of the interposition of God in time of calamity and danger (Ex. xv. 16; Job xl. 9; Ps. xliv. 3; lxxvii. 15; lxxxix. 21; xcviii. 1). Lowth proposes to read 'our arm' instead of 'their arm;' and the connection would seem to demand such a reading. The Vulgate and the Chaldee read it in this manner, but there is no authority from MSS. for a change in the text. The truth seems to be, that Isaiah, impelled by prophetic inspiration, here interposes *his own* feelings as a Jew, and offers *his own* prayer that God would be the strength of the nation. The form, however, is *immediately* changed, and he presents the prayer of the people. ¶ *Every morning.* Constantly; at all times. ¶ *In the time of trouble.* Referring particularly to the trouble consequent on the invasion of the Assyrians.

3. *At the noise of the tumult.* Lowth supposes that this is addressed by the prophet in the name of God, or rather by God himself, to the Assyrian, and that it means that notwithstanding the terror which he had caused the invaded countries, he would himself fall and become an easy prey to those whom he intended to subdue. But probably it should be regarded as a part of the address which the Jews made to JEHOVAH (ver. 2), and the word 'tumult'—הָמוֹן, *sound, noise*, as of rain (1 Kings xviii. 41), or of music (Ezek. xxvi. 13; Amos v. 23), or the bustle or tumult of a people (1 Sam. iv. 11; xiv. 19; Job xxxix. 7)—refers here to the voice of God by which the army was overthrown. JEHOVAH is often represented as speaking to men in a voice fitted to produce consternation and alarm. Thus it is said of the vision which Daniel saw of a man by the side of the river Hiddekel, 'his words' were 'like the voice of a multitude' (הָמוֹן), (Dan. x. 6). And thus, in Rev. i. 10, the voice of Christ is said to have been 'like the voice of a trumpet;' and in ver. 15, 'like the sound of many waters.' It will be recollected also that it was said that God would send upon the Assyrian army 'thunder, and an earthquake, and a great noise, with storm and tempest, and a flame of devouring fire' (Isa. xxix. 6; comp. ch. xxx. 30); and it is doubtless to this prediction that the prophet refers here. God would come forth with the voice of indignation, and would scatter the combined armies of the Assyrian. ¶ *The people fled.* The people in the army of the Assyrian. A large part of them were slain by the angel of the Lord in a single night, but a portion of them with Sennacherib escaped and fled to their own land (Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37. ¶ *At the lifting up of thyself.* Of JEHOVAH; as when one rouses himself to strike. ¶ *The nations.* The army of Sennacherib was doubtless

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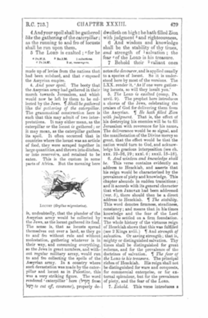

4 And your spoil shall be gathered *like* the gathering of the caterpillar; as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

5 The LORD is exalted; [a] for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment [b] and righteousness.

6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of [1] salvation; the fear [c] of the LORD is his treasure.

7 Behold their [2] valiant ones

a Ps.97.9. b ch.1.26. 1 salvations. c Pr.14.27. 2 or, messengers.

made up of levies from the nations that had been subdued, and that composed the Assyrian empire.

4. *And your spoil.* The booty that the Assyrian army had gathered in their march towards Jerusalem, and which would now be left by them to be collected by the Jews. ¶ *Shall be gathered* like *the gathering of the caterpillar.* The grammatical construction here is such that this may admit of two interpretations. It may either mean, as the caterpillar or the locust *is* gathered; or it may mean, as the caterpillar gathers its spoil. It often occurred that in countries where the locust was an article of food, they were scraped together in large quantities, and thrown into ditches, or into reservoirs, and retained to be eaten. This is the custom in some parts of Africa. But the meaning here is, undoubtedly, that the plunder of the Assyrian army would be collected by the Jews, as the locust gathered its food. The sense is, that as locusts spread themselves out over a land, as they go to and fro without rule and without molestation, gathering whatever is in their way, and consuming everything, so the *Jews* in great numbers, and without regular military array, would run to and fro collecting the spoils of the Assyrian army. In a country where such devastation was made by the caterpillar and locust as in Palestine, this was a very striking figure. The word rendered 'caterpillar' here (חָסִיל from חָסַל *to cut off, consume*), properly denotes *the devourer*, and is applied usually to a species of locust. So it is understood here by most of the versions. The LXX. render it, 'As if one were gathering locusts, so will they insult you.'

LOCUST (*Gryllus migratorius*).

5. *The* LORD *is exalted* (comp. Ps. xcvii. 9). The prophet here introduces a chorus of the Jews, celebrating the praises of God for delivering them from the Assyrian. ¶ *He hath filled Zion with judgment.* That is, the effect of his destroying his enemies will be to fill Jerusalem with reverence for his name. The deliverance would be so signal, and the manifestation of the Divine mercy so great, that the effect would be that the nation would turn to God, and acknowledge his gracious interposition (see ch. xxx. 22–26, 29; xxxi. 6; xxxii. 15–18).

6. *And wisdom and knowledge shall be.* This verse contains evidently an address to Hezekiah, and asserts that his reign would be characterized by the prevalence of piety and knowledge. This chapter abounds in sudden transitions; and it accords with its general character that when JEHOVAH had been addressed (ver. 5), there should then be a direct address to Hezekiah. ¶ *The stability.* This word denotes firmness, steadiness, constancy; and means that in his times knowledge and the fear of the Lord would be settled on a firm foundation. The whole history of the virtuous reign of Hezekiah shows that this was fulfilled (see 2 Kings xviii.) ¶ And *strength of salvation.* Or saving strength; that is, mighty or distinguished salvation. Thy times shall be distinguished for great reforms, and for the prevalence of the doctrines of salvation. ¶ *The fear of the* LORD *is his treasure.* The principal riches of Hezekiah. His reign shall not be distinguished for wars and conquests, for commercial enterprise, or for external splendour, but for the prevalence of piety, and the fear of the LORD.

7. *Behold.* This verse introduces a

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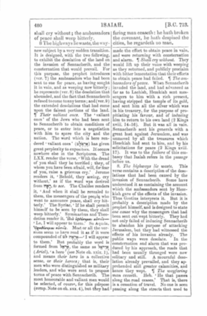

shall cry without; the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

8 The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

new subject by a very sudden transition. It is designed, with the two following, to exhibit the desolation of the land on the invasion of Sennacherib, and the consternation that would prevail. For this purpose, the prophet introduces (ver. 7) the ambassadors who had been sent to sue for peace, as having sought it in vain, and as weeping now bitterly; he represents (ver. 8) the desolation that abounded, and the fact that Sennacherib refused to come to any terms; and (ver. 9) the extended desolations that had come upon the fairest portions of the land. ¶ *Their valiant ones.* The 'valiant ones' of the Jews who had been sent to Sennacherib to obtain conditions of peace, or to enter into a negotiation with him to spare the city and the nation. The word which is here rendered 'valiant ones' (אֶרְאֶלָּם) has given great perplexity to expositors. It occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. The LXX. render the verse, 'With the dread of you shall they be terrified; they, of whom you have been afraid, will, for fear of you, raise a grievous cry.' Jerome renders it, 'Behold, they seeing, cry without,' as if the word was derived from רָאָה, *to see*. The Chaldee renders it, 'And when it shall be revealed to them, the messengers of the people who went to announce peace, shall cry bitterly.' The Syriac, 'If he shall permit himself to be seen by them, they shall weep bitterly.' Symmachus and Theodotion render it, Ἰδοὺ ὀφθήσομαι αὐτοῖς—'Lo, I will appear to them.' So Aquila, Ὀφθήσομαι αὐτοῖς. Most or all the versions seem to have read it as if it were compounded of אֵרָאֶה לָם—'I will appear to them.' But probably the word is formed from אֲרִאֵל, the same as אֲרִיאֵל (*Ariel*), 'a hero' (see Note ch. xxix. 1), and means *their hero* in a collective sense, or *their heroes*; that is, their men who were distinguished as military leaders, and who were sent to propose terms of peace with Sennacherib. The most honourable and valiant men would be selected, of course, for this purpose (comp. Note on ch. xxx. 4), but they had made the effort to obtain peace in vain, and were returning with consternation and alarm. ¶ *Shall cry without.* They would lift up their voice with weeping as they returned, and publicly proclaim with bitter lamentation that their efforts to obtain peace had failed. ¶ *The ambassadors of peace.* When Sennacherib invaded the land, and had advanced as far as to Lachish, Hezekiah sent messengers to him with a rich present, having stripped the temple of its gold, and sent him all the silver which was in his treasury, for the purpose of propitiating his favour, and of inducing him to return to his own land (2 Kings xviii. 14–16). But it was all in vain. Sennacherib sent his generals with a great host against Jerusalem, and was unmoved by all the treasures which Hezekiah had sent to him, and by his solicitations for peace (2 Kings xviii. 17). It was to the *failure* of this embassy that Isaiah refers in the passage before us.

8. *The highways lie waste.* This verse contains a description of the desolations that had been caused by the invasion of Sennacherib. Some have understood it as containing the account which the ambassadors sent by Hezekiah gave of the effects of the invasion. Thus Grotius interprets it. But it is probably a description made by the prophet himself, and is designed to state *one cause* why the messengers that had been sent out wept bitterly. They had not only failed of inducing Sennacherib to abandon his purpose of attacking Jerusalem, but they had witnessed the effects of his invasion already. The public ways were desolate. In the consternation and alarm that was produced by his approach, the roads that had been usually thronged were now solitary and still. A mournful desolation already prevailed, and they apprehended still greater calamities, and hence they wept. ¶ *The wayfaring man ceaseth.* Heb. 'He that passes along the road ceases.' That is, there is a cessation of travel. No one is seen passing along the streets that used to

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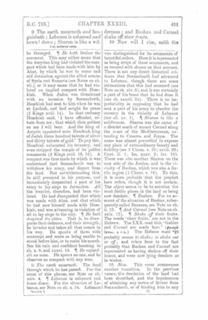

9 The earth mourneth *and* languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed *and* hewn [1] down; Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their fruits*.

10 Now will I rise, saith the

1 or, withered away.

be thronged. ¶ *He hath broken the covenant.* This may either mean that the Assyrian king had violated the compact which had been made with him by Ahaz, by which he was to come and *aid* Jerusalem against the allied armies of Syria and Samaria (see Notes on ch. vii.), or it may mean that he had violated an implied compact with Hezekiah. When Judea was threatened with an invasion by Sennacherib, Hezekiah had sent to him when he was at Lachish, and had sought for peace (2 Kings xviii. 14). In that embassy Hezekiah said, 'I have offended, return from me; that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.' To pay this, Hezekiah exhausted his treasury, and even stripped the temple of its golden ornaments (2 Kings xviii. 15, 16). A compact was thus made by which it was understood that Sennacherib was to withdraw his army, and depart from the land. But notwithstanding this, he still persisted in his purpose, and immediately despatched a part of his army to lay siege to Jerusalem. *All* the treaties, therefore, had been violated. He had disregarded that which was made with Ahaz, and that which he had now himself made with Hezekiah, and was advancing in violation of all to lay siege to the city. ¶ *He hath despised the cities.* That is, he disregards their defences, and their strength; he invades and takes all that comes in his way. He *speaks* of them with contempt and scorn as being unable to stand before him, or to resist his march. See his vain and confident boasting in ch. x. 9, and xxxvi. 19. ¶ *He regardeth no man.* He spares no one, and he observes no compact with any man.

9. *The earth mourneth.* The land through which he has passed. For the sense of this phrase, see Note on ch. xxiv. 4. ¶ *Lebanon is ashamed* and *hewn down.* For the situation of Lebanon, see Note on ch. x. 34. Lebanon was distinguished for its ornaments of beautiful cedars. Here it is represented as being stript of these ornaments, and as covered with shame on that account. There is not any direct historical evidence that Sennacherib *had* advanced to Lebanon, though there are some intimations that this had occurred (see Note on ch. xiv. 8), and it was certainly a part of his boast that he had done it (see ch. xxxvii. 24). There is no improbability in supposing that he had sent a part of his army to plunder the country in the vicinity of Lebanon (see ch. xx. 1). ¶ *Sharon is like a wilderness.* Sharon was the name of a district south of mount Carmel along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending to Cesarea and Joppa. The name was almost proverbial to express any place of extraordinary beauty and fertility (see 1 Chron. v. 16; xxvii. 29; Cant. ii. 1; Isa. xxxv. 2; lxv. 10). There was also another Sharon on the east side of the Jordan, and in the vicinity of Bashan, which was also a fertile region (1 Chron. v. 16). To this, it is more probable that the prophet here refers, though it is not certain. The *object* seems to be to mention the most fertile places in the land as being now desolate. ¶ *Bashan.* For an account of the situation of Bashan, subsequently called Batanea, see Note on ch. ii. 13. ¶ *And Carmel* (see Note on ch. xxix. 17). ¶ *Shake off* their fruits. The words 'their fruits,' are not in the Hebrew. The LXX. read this, 'Galilee and Carmel are made bare' (φανερὰ ἔσται, κ.τ.λ.) The Hebrew word נֹעֵר probably means *to shake; to shake out* or *off*; and refers here to the fact probably that Bashan and Carmel are represented as having shaken off *their leaves*, and were now lying desolate as in winter.

10. *Now.* This verse commences another transition. In the previous verses, the desolation of the land had been described, and the hopelessness of obtaining any terms of favour from Sennacherib, or of binding him to any

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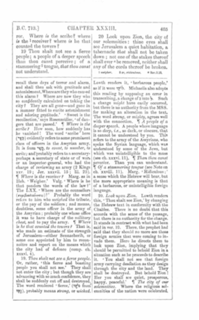

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXXIII. 485

ror. Where *is* the scribe? where *is* the [1] receiver? where *is* he that counted the towers?

19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people; a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering [2] tongue, *that thou canst* not understand.

20 Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that* shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever [a] be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

[1] weigher. [2] or, ridiculous. [a] Rev.3.12.

recall these days of terror and alarm, and shall then ask with gratitude and astonishment, Where are they who caused this alarm? Where are now they who so confidently calculated on taking the city? They are all gone—and gone in a manner fitted to excite astonishment and adoring gratitude.' 'Sweet is the recollection,' says Rosenmüller, 'of dangers that are passed.' ¶ *Where is the scribe? How* soon, how suddenly has he vanished! The word 'scribe' here (סֹפֵר) evidently refers to some prominent class of officers in the Assyrian army. It is from סָפַר, *to count, to number, to write;* and probably refers to a secretary—perhaps a secretary of state or of war, or an inspector-general, who had the charge of reviewing an army (2 Kings xxv. 19; Jer. xxxvii. 15; lii. 25). ¶ *Where is the receiver?* Marg. as in Heb. 'Weigher.' Vulg. 'Where is he that ponders the words of the law?' The LXX. 'Where are the counsellors (συμβουλεύοντες)?' Probably the word refers to him who *weighed* the tribute, or the pay of the soldiers; and means, doubtless, some officer in the army of the Assyrian; probably one whose office it was to have charge of the *military chest,* and to pay the army. ¶ *Where is he that counted the towers?* That is, who made an estimate of the strength of Jerusalem—either Sennacherib, or some one appointed by him to reconnoitre and report on the means which the city had of defence (comp. ch. xxxvi. 4).

19. *Thou shalt not see a fierce people.* Or, rather, 'this fierce and boasting people you shall not see.' They shall not enter the city; but though they are advancing with so much confidence, they shall be suddenly cut off and destroyed. The word rendered 'fierce,' (נוֹעָז from עָזַז), probably means *strong,* or *wicked.* Lowth renders it, 'barbarous people,' as if it were לוֹעֵז. Michaelis also adopts this reading by supposing an error in transcribing, a change of נ into ל. Such a change *might* have easily occurred, but there is no authority from the MSS. for making an alteration in the text. The word *strong,* or *mighty,* agrees well with the connection. ¶ *A people of a deeper speech.* A people whose language is so *deep, i.e.,* so dark, or obscure, that it cannot be understood by you. This refers to the army of the Assyrians, who spoke the Syrian language, which was understood by some of the Jews, but which was unintelligible to the mass (see ch. xxxvi. 11). ¶ *Than thou canst perceive.* Than you can understand. ¶ *Of a stammering tongue* (see Note on ch. xxviii. 11). Marg. 'Ridiculous;' a sense which the Hebrew will bear, but the more appropriate meaning is that of a barbarous, or unintelligible foreign language.

20. *Look upon Zion.* Lowth renders this, 'Thou shalt see Zion,' by changing the Hebrew text in conformity with the Chaldee. There is no doubt that this accords with the sense of the passage, but there is *no* authority for the change. It stands in contrast with what had been said in ver. 19. There, the prophet had said that they should no more see those foreign armies that were coming to invade them. Here he directs them to look upon Zion, implying that they should be permitted to behold Zion in a situation such as he proceeds to describe it. 'You shall not see that foreign army carrying desolation as they design through the city and the land. They shall be destroyed. But behold Zion! Her you shall see quiet, prosperous, happy, peaceful.' ¶ *The city of our solemnities.* Where the religious solemnities of the nation were celebrated.

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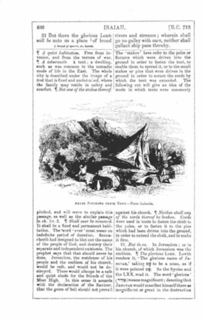

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21 But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place [1] of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

[1] broad of spaces, or, hands.

¶ *A quiet habitation.* Free from invasion, and from the terrors of war. ¶ *A tabernacle.* A tent; a dwelling, such as was common in the nomadic mode of life in the East. The whole city is described under the image of a *tent* that is fixed and undisturbed, where the family may reside in safety and comfort. ¶ *Not one of the stakes thereof.* The 'stakes' here refer to the poles or fixtures which were driven into the ground in order to fasten the tent, to enable them to spread it, or to the small stakes or pins that were driven in the ground in order to secure the cords by which the tent was extended. The following cut will give an idea of the mode in which tents were commonly pitched, and will serve to explain this passage, as well as the similar passage in ch. liv. 2. ¶ *Shall ever be removed.* It shall be a fixed and permanent habitation. The word 'ever' must mean an indefinite period of duration. Sennacherib had designed to blot out the name of the people of God, and destroy their separate and independent existence. The prophet says that that should never be done. Jerusalem, the residence of his people and the emblem of his church, would be safe, and would not be destroyed. There would *always* be a safe and quiet abode for the friends of the Most High. In this sense it accords with the declaration of the Saviour, that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church. ¶ *Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.* Cords were used in tents to fasten the cloth to the poles, or to fasten it to the pins which had been driven into the ground, in order to extend the cloth, and to make it firm.

ARABS PITCHING THEIR TENT.—*From Laborde.*

21. *But there.* In Jerusalem; or in his church, of which Jerusalem was the emblem. ¶ *The glorious* LORD. Lowth renders it, 'The glorious name of JEHOVAH,' taking שָׁם to be a noun, as if it were pointed שֵׁם. So the Syriac and the LXX. read it. The word 'glorious' (אַדִּיר) means magnificent; denoting that JEHOVAH would manifest himself there as magnificent or great in the destruction

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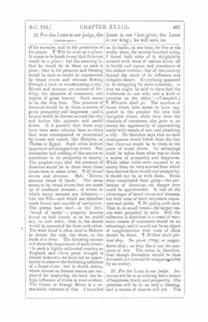

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXXIII. 487

22 For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our [1] law-giver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us.

[1] statute-maker.

of his enemies, and in the protection of his people. ¶ Will be *unto us a place.* It seems to be harsh to say that JEHOVAH would be *a place;* but the meaning is, that he would be to them *as* such a place; that is, his presence and blessing would be such as would be represented by broad rivers and streams flowing through a land, or encompassing a city. Rivers and streams are sources of fertility, the channels of commerce, and objects of great beauty. Such seems to be the *idea* here. The presence of JEHOVAH would be to them a source of great prosperity and happiness; and a beauty would be thrown around the city and nation like majestic and useful rivers. It is *possible* that there may have been some allusion here to cities that were encompassed or penetrated by rivers and canals, like Babylon, or Thebes in Egypt. Such cities derived important advantages from rivers. But Jerusalem had nothing of this nature to contribute to its prosperity or beauty. The prophet says, that the presence of JEHOVAH would be to them what these rivers were to other cities. ¶ *Of broad rivers and streams.* Heb. 'Rivers, streams broad of hands.' The sense seems to be, broad rivers that are made up of confluent streams; or rivers to which many streams are tributary—like the Nile—and which are therefore made *broad,* and capable of navigation. The phrase here used—in the Heb. 'broad of hands'—properly denotes *broad on both hands,* or as we would say, *on both sides;* that is, the shores would be separated far from each other. The word *hand* is often used in Hebrew to denote the *side,* the shore, or the bank of a river. The following extract will show the importance of such rivers: 'In such a highly cultivated country as England, and where great drought is almost unknown, we have not an opportunity to observe the fertilizing influence of a broad river; but in South Africa, where almost no human means are employed for improving the land, the benign influence of rivers is most evident. The Great, or Orange River, is a remarkable instance of this. I travelled on its banks, at one time, for five or six weeks, when, for several hundred miles, I found both sides of it delightfully covered with trees of various kinds, all in health and vigour, and abundance of the richest verdure; but all the country beyond the reach of its influence was complete desert. Everything appeared to be struggling for mere existence; so that we might be said to have had the wilderness on one side, and a kind of paradise on the other.'—(Campbell.) ¶ *Wherein shall go.* The mention of broad rivers here seems to have suggested to the prophet the idea that navigable rivers, while they were the channels of commerce, also gave to an enemy the opportunity of approaching easily with vessels of war, and attacking a city. He therefore says that no such consequence would follow, from the fact that JEHOVAH would be to them in the place of broad rivers. No advantage could be taken from what was to them a source of prosperity and happiness. While other cities were exposed to an enemy from the very sources from which they derived their wealth and prosperity, it would not be so with them. From what constituted their glory—the protection of JEHOVAH—no danger ever could be apprehended. It had all the advantages of broad rivers and streams, but with none of their attendant exposures and perils. ¶ *No galley with oars.* That is, no small vessel—for larger vessels were propelled by sails. Still the reference is doubtless to a vessel of war; since vessels of commerce would be an advantage, and it would not be an object of congratulation that none of them should be there. ¶ *Neither shall gallant ship.* No *great* (אַדִּיר) or magnificent ship; no ship fitted out for purposes of war. The sense is, therefore, that though Jerusalem should be thus favoured, yet it would be unapproachable by an enemy.

22. *For the* LORD *is our judge.* JEHOVAH will be to us nothing but a source of happiness, truth, and prosperity. His presence will be to us only a blessing, and a means of success and joy. The

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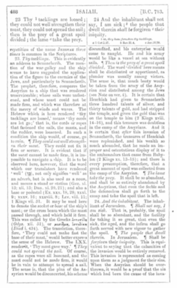

488 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

23 Thy [1] tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail; then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame [a] take the prey.

24 And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; [b] the people that dwell therein *shall be* forgiven [c] *their* iniquity.

[1] or, *they have forsaken thy tacklings.*
[a] 1 Cor.1.27. [b] Rev.21.4. [c] Jer.50.20.

repetition of the name JEHOVAH *three times* is common in the Scriptures.

23. *Thy tacklings.* This is evidently an address to Sennacherib. The mention of the war-galley and the ship seems to have suggested the application of the figure to the enemies of the Jews, and particularly to Sennacherib. The prophet, therefore, compares the Assyrian to a ship that was rendered unserviceable; whose sails were unfastened, and whose mast could not be made firm, and which was therefore at the mercy of winds and waves. The Hebrew which is here rendered 'thy tacklings are loosed,' means 'thy cords are let go;' that is, the cords or ropes that fastened the sails, the masts, and the rudder, were loosened. In such a condition the ship would, of course, go to ruin. ¶ *They could not well strengthen their mast.* They could not fix it firm or secure. It is evident that if the *mast* cannot be made firm, it is impossible to navigate a ship. It is to be observed here, however, that the word which our translators have rendered 'well' (כֵּן), not only signifies 'well' as an adverb, but is also used as a noun, and means a stand or station (Gen. xl. 13; xli. 13; Dan. xi. 20, 21); and also a base or pedestal (Ex. xxx. 18, 28; xxxi. 9; xxxv. 16; xxxviii. 8; Lev. viii. 11; 1 Kings vii. 31. It may be used here to denote the *socket or base* of the ship's mast; or the cross beam which the mast passed through, and which held it firm. This was called by the Greeks ἱστοπέδη (*Odys.* xii. 51), or μεσόδμη, ἱστοδόκη (*Iliad* i. 434). The translation, therefore, 'They could not make fast the base of their mast,' would better express the sense of the Hebrew. The LXX. render it, 'Thy mast gave way.' ¶ *They could not spread the sail.* Of course, as the ropes were all loosened, and the mast could not be made firm, it would be in vain to attempt to spread a sail. The sense is, that the plan of the Assyrian would be disconcerted, his scheme discomfited, and his enterprise would come to naught. He and his army would be like a vessel at sea without sails. ¶ *Then is the prey of a great spoil divided.* The word 'divided' here means shall be distributed or apportioned, as plunder was usually among victors. The sense is, that much booty would be taken from the army of the Assyrian and distributed among the Jews (see Note on ver. 4). It is certain that Hezekiah had given to Sennacherib three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, and had stripped the temple, and given the gold that was on the temple to him (2 Kings xviii. 14–16), and this treasure was doubtless in the camp of the Assyrians. And it is certain that *after* this invasion of Sennacherib, the treasures of Hezekiah were replenished, and his wealth so much abounded, that he made an improper and ostentatious display of it to the ambassadors that came from Babylon (2 Kings xx. 13–15); and there is every presumption, therefore, that a great amount of spoil was collected from the camp of the Assyrian. ¶ *The lame take the prey.* It shall be so abundant, and shall be so entirely abandoned by the Assyrians, that even the feeble and the defenceless shall go forth to the camp and take the spoil that is left.

24. *And the inhabitant.* The inhabitant of Jerusalem. ¶ *Shall not say, I am sick.* That is, probably, the spoil shall be so abundant, and the facility for taking it so great, that even the sick, the aged, and the infirm shall go forth nerved with new vigour to gather the spoil. ¶ *The people that dwell therein.* In Jerusalem. ¶ *Shall be forgiven their iniquity.* This is equivalent to saying that the calamities of the invasion would be entirely removed. This invasion is represented as coming upon them as a judgment for their sins. When the Assyrian should be overthrown, it would be a proof that the sin which had been the cause of the inva-

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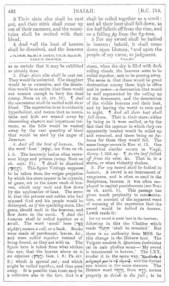

492 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4 And [a]all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig-tree.

5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, [b]and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

[a] Ps.102.26; Eze.32.7,8; Joel2.31; 3.15,16; Mat.24.29; 2 Pet.3.10; Rev.6.13,14.

[b] Jer.49.7.

as so certain that it may be exhibited as already done.

3. *Their slain also shall be cast out.* They would lie unburied. The slaughter would be so extensive, and the desolation would be so entire, that there would not remain enough to bury the dead (comp. Notes on ch. xiv. 19). ¶ *And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.* The expression here is evidently hyperbolical, and means that as mountains and hills are wasted away by descending showers and impetuous torrents, so the hills would be washed away by the vast quantity of blood that would be shed by the anger of JEHOVAH.

4. *And all the host of heaven.* On the word 'host' (צָבָא), see Note on ch. i. 9. The heavenly bodies often represent kings and princes (comp. Note on ch. xxiv. 21). ¶ *Shall be dissolved* (נָמַקּוּ). This figure Vitringa supposes to be taken from the vulgar prejudice by which the stars appear to be crystals, or gems, set in the azure vault of heaven, which may *melt* and flow down by the application of heat. The sense is, that the princes and nobles who had opposed God and his people would be destroyed, *as if* the sparkling stars, like gems, should *melt* in the heavens, and flow down to the earth. ¶ *And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.* The word 'scroll' here (סֵפֶר *sêphĕr*) means *a roll*, or a book. Books were made of parchment, leaves, &c., and were *rolled together* instead of being *bound*, as they are with us. The figure here is taken from what strikes the eye, that the heaven above us is *an expanse* (רָקִיעַ Gen. i. 8; Ps. civ. 2.) which is *spread out*; and which might be *rolled together*, and thus pass away. It is possible that there may be a reference also to the fact, that in a storm, when the sky is filled with dark rolling clouds, the heavens seem to be *rolled together*, and to be passing away. The sense is, that there would be great destruction among those high in office and in power—a destruction that would be well represented by the rolling up of the firmament, and the destruction of the visible heavens and their host, and by leaving the world to ruin and to night. ¶ *And all their host shall fall down.* That is, their stars; either by being as it were *melted*, or by the fact that the *expanse* in which they are apparently located would be rolled up and removed, and there being no *fixtures* for them they would fall. The same image occurs in Rev. vi. 13. One somewhat similar occurs in Virgil, *Georg.* i. 365, *sq.* ¶ *As the leaf falleth off from the vine*, &c. That is, in a storm, or when violently shaken.

5. *For my sword shall be bathed in heaven.* A sword is an instrument of vengeance, and is often so used in the Scriptures, because it was often employed in capital punishments (see Note on ch. xxvii. 1). This passage has given much perplexity to commentators, on account of the apparent want of meaning of the expression that the sword would be *bathed in heaven*. Lowth reads it:

For my sword is made bare in the heavens;

following in this the Chaldee which reads תִּתְגְּלֵי 'shall be revealed.' But there is no authority from MSS. for this change in the Hebrew text. The Vulgate renders it, *Quoniam inebriatus est in cœlo gladius meus*—'My sword is intoxicated in heaven.' The LXX. render it in the same way, Ἐμεθύσθη ἡ μάχαιρά μου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ; and the Syriac and Arabic in the same manner. The Hebrew word רִוְּתָה, from רָוָה, means properly *to drink to the full*; to be

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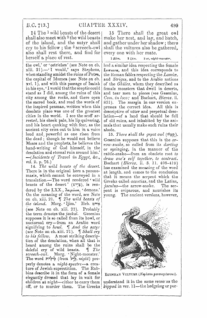

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXXIV. 499

14 The [1] wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with [2] the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the [3] screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

[1] Ziim. [2] Ijim. [3] or, night-monster.

the owl,' or 'ostriches' (see Note on ch. xiii. 21).—'I would,' says Stephens, when standing amidst the ruins of Petra, the capital of Idumea (see Note on ch. xvi. 1), and with this passage of Isaiah in his eye, 'I would that the sceptic could stand as I did, among the ruins of this city among the rocks, and there open the sacred book, and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoff arrested, his cheek pale, his lip quivering, and his heart quaking with fear, as the ancient city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as one risen from the dead; though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the hand-writing of God himself, in the desolation and eternal ruin around him.'—(*Incidents of Travel in Egypt, &c.*, vol. ii. p. 76.)

14. *The wild beasts of the desert.* There is in the original here a paronomasia, which cannot be conveyed in a translation.—The word rendered 'wild beasts of the desert' (צִיִּים), is rendered by the LXX., δαιμόνια, 'demons.' On the meaning of the word, see Note on ch. xiii. 21. ¶ *The wild beasts of the island.* Marg. 'Ijim.' Heb. אִיִּים (see Note on ch. xiii. 22). Probably the term denotes the *jackal*. Gesenius supposes it is so called from its howl, or nocturnal cry—from an Arabic word signifying to *howl*. ¶ *And the satyr* (see Note on ch. xiii. 21). ¶ *Shall cry to his fellow.* A most striking description of the desolation, when all that is heard among the ruins shall be the doleful cry of wild beasts. ¶ *The screech-owl.* Marg. 'Night-monster.' The word לִילִית (from לַיִל, *night*) properly denotes a *night-spectre*—a creature of Jewish superstition. The Rabbins describe it in the form of a female elegantly dressed that lay in wait for children at night—either to carry them off, or to murder them. The Greeks had a similar idea respecting the female *Lamia*, and this idea corresponds to the Roman fables respecting the *Lamiæ*, and *Striges*, and to the Arabic notions of the *Ghûles*, whom they described as female monsters that dwell in deserts, and tear men to pieces (see Gesenius, *Com. in loco;* and Bochart, *Hieroz.* ii. 831). The margin in our version expresses the correct idea. All this is descriptive of utter and perpetual desolation—of a land that should be full of old ruins, and inhabited by the animals that usually make such ruins their abode.

15. *There shall the great owl* (קִפּוֹז). Gesenius supposes that this is the *arrow-snake*, so called from its *darting* or *springing*, in the manner of the rattle-snake—from an obsolete root *to draw one's self together, to contract*. Bochart (*Hieroz.* ii. 3. 11. 408–419) has examined the meaning of the word at length, and comes to the conclusion that it means the serpent which the Greeks called *acontias*, and the Latins, *jaculus*—the arrow-snake. The serpent is oviparous, and nourishes its young. The ancient versions, however,

EGYPTIAN VULTURE (*Neophron percnopterus*).

understand it in the same sense as the *kippod* in ver. 11—the hedgehog or por-

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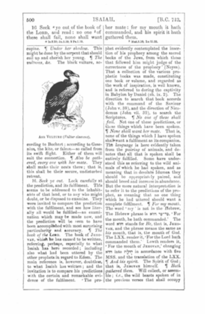

500 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

16 Seek [a] ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one [b] of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.

[a] Ja.8.20; Jn.5.39; 2 Pe.1.19. [b] Mat.5.18; Lu.21.33.

cupine. ¶ *Under her shadow.* This might be done by the serpent that should coil up and cherish her young. ¶ *The vultures, &c.* The black vulture, according to Bochart; according to Gesenius, the kite, or falcon—so called from its swift flight. Either of them will suit the connection. ¶ *Also be gathered, every one with her mate.* They shall make their nests there; that is, this shall be their secure, undisturbed retreat.

ASH VULTURE (*Vultur cinereus*).

16. *Seek ye out.* Look carefully at the prediction, and its fulfilment. This seems to be addressed to the inhabitants of that land, or to any who might doubt, or be disposed to examine. They were invited to compare the prediction with the fulfilment, and see how literally all would be fulfilled—an examination which may be made now, and the prediction will be seen to have been accomplished with most surprising particularity and accuracy. ¶ *The book of the* LORD. The book of JEHOVAH, which he has caused to be written, referring, perhaps, especially to what Isaiah has here recorded; including also what had been uttered by the other prophets in regard to Edom. The main reference is, however, doubtless, to what Isaiah has written; and the invitation is to compare his predictions with the certain and remarkable evidence of the fulfilment. 'The prophet evidently contemplated the insertion of his prophecy among the sacred books of the Jews, from which those that followed him might judge of the correctness of the prophecy' (Noyes). That a collection of the various prophetic books was made, constituting one book or volume, and regarded as the work of inspiration, is well known, and is referred to during the captivity in Babylon by Daniel (ch. ix. 2). The direction to search that book accords with the command of the Saviour (John v. 39), and the direction of Nicodemus (John vii. 32), to search the Scriptures. ¶ *No one of these shall fail.* Not one of these predictions, or these things which have been spoken. ¶ *None shall want her mate.* That is, none of the things which I have spoken shall want a fulfilment as its companion. The *language* is here evidently taken from the *pairing* of animals, and denotes that all that is spoken shall be entirely fulfilled. Some have understood this as referring to the wild animals of which he had spoken, and as meaning that in desolate Idumea they should be appropriately paired, and should breed and increase in abundance. But the more natural interpretation is to refer it to the predictions of the prophet, as meaning that no one thing which he had uttered should want a complete fulfilment. ¶ *For my mouth.* The word 'my' is not in the Hebrew. The Hebrew phrase is כִּי־פִי הוּא. 'For the mouth, he hath commanded.' The word הוּא stands for *He*, that is, JEHOVAH, and the phrase means the same as *his* mouth, that is, the mouth of God. The LXX. render it, 'For the Lord hath commanded them.' Lowth renders it, 'For the mouth of JEHOVAH,' changing הוּא into יְהוָה in accordance with five MSS. and the translation of the LXX. ¶ *And his spirit.* The Spirit of God; that is, JEHOVAH himself. ¶ *Hath gathered them.* Will collect, or assemble; *i.e.*, the wild beasts spoken of in the previous verses that shall occupy

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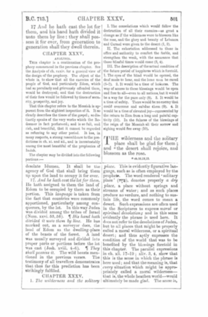

B.C. 713.] CHAPTER XXXV. 501

17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ANALYSIS.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the prophecy commenced in the previous chapter. See the Analysis of ch. xxxiv. for a general view of the design of the prophecy. The object of the whole is, to show that all the enemies of the people of God, and particularly Edom, which had so peculiarly and grievously offended them, would be destroyed; and that the destruction of their foes would be followed by times of security, prosperity, and joy.

That this chapter refers to the Messiah is apparent from the slightest inspection of it. It so clearly describes the times of the gospel; so distinctly speaks of the very works which the Redeemer in fact performed; and is so full, and rich, and beautiful, that it cannot be regarded as referring to any other period. It has, in many respects, a strong resemblance to the predictions in ch. xi. and xii., and is incontestably among the most beautiful of the prophecies of Isaiah.

The chapter may be divided into the following portions:—

I. The consolations which would follow the destruction of all their enemies—as great a change as if the wilderness were to blossom like the rose, and the glory and beauty of Lebanon and Carmel were given to the desert (1, 2).

II. The exhortation addressed to those in office and authority to comfort the feeble, and strengthen the weak, with the assurance that those blissful times would come (3, 4).

III. The description of the actual condition of the future period of happiness which is foretold. 1. The eyes of the blind would be opened, the deaf made to hear, and the lame man be cured (5–7). 2. It would be a time of holiness. The way of access to these blessings would be open and free to all—even to all nations, but it would be a way for the pure only (8). 3. It would be a time of safety. There would be no enemy that could overcome and subdue them (9). 4. It would be a time of elevated joy—represented by the return to Zion from a long and painful captivity (10). In the fulness of the blessings of the reign of the Messiah all their sorrow and sighing would flee away (10).

THE wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and [a] the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

[a] ch.55.12,13.

desolate Idumea. It shall be the agency of God that shall bring them up upon the land to occupy it for ever.

17. *And he hath cast the lot for them.* He hath assigned to them the land of Edom to be occupied by them as their portion. This *language* is taken from the fact that countries were commonly apportioned, particularly among conquerors, by the lot. In this way Judea was divided among the tribes of Israel (Num. xxvi. 55, 56). ¶ *His hand hath divided it unto them by line.* He has marked out, as a surveyor does, the land of Edom as the dwelling-place of the beasts of the forest. A land was usually surveyed and divided into proper parts or portions before the lot was cast (Josh. xviii. 4–6). ¶ *They shall possess it.* The wild beasts mentioned in the previous verses. The testimony of all travellers demonstrates that thus far this prediction has been strikingly fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1. *The wilderness and the solitary place.* This is evidently figurative language, such as is often employed by the prophets. The word rendered 'solitary place' (צִיָּה), denotes properly *a dry place*, a place without springs and streams of water; and as such places produce no verdure, and nothing to sustain life, the word comes to mean a desert. Such expressions are often used in the Scriptures to express *moral* or *spiritual desolation;* and in this sense evidently the phrase is used here. It does not refer to the desolations of Judea, but to all places that might be properly called a moral wilderness, or a spiritual desert; and thus aptly expresses the condition of the world that was to be benefited by the blessings foretold in this chapter. The parallel expressions in ch. xli. 17–19; xliv. 3, 4, show that this is the sense in which the phrase is here used; and that the meaning is, that *every* situation which might be appropriately called a moral wilderness—that is, the whole heathen world—would ultimately be made glad. The sense is,

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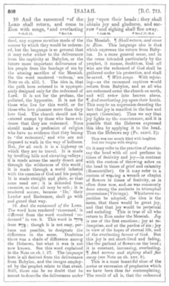

508 ISAIAH. [B.C. 713.

10 And the ransomed [a]of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs, [b]and everlasting joy [c]upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow [d]and sighing shall flee away.

a ch.51.11. b Rev.7.9. c Jude 24. d Rev.7.17; 21.4.

deed, any express mention made of the *means* by which they would be redeemed, but the language is so general that it may refer either to the deliverance from the captivity at Babylon, or the future more important deliverance of his people from the bondage of sin by the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. On the word rendered 'redeem,' see Note on ch. xliii. 1. The idea is, that the path here referred to is appropriately designed only for the redeemed of Lord. It is not for the profane, the polluted, the hypocrite. It is not for those who live for this world, or for those who love pleasure more than they love God. The church should not be entered except by those who have evidence that they are redeemed. None should make a profession of religion who have no evidence that they belong to 'the redeemed,' and who are not disposed to walk in the way of holiness. But, *for* all such it is a highway on which they are to travel. It is made by levelling hills and elevating valleys; it is made across the sandy desert and through the wilderness of this world; it is made through a world infested with the enemies of God and his people. It is made straight and plain, so that none need err; it is defended from enemies, so that all may be safe; it is rendered secure, because 'He,' their Leader and Redeemer, shall go with and guard that way.

10. *And the ransomed of the* LORD. The word here rendered 'ransomed,' is different from the word rendered 'redeemed' in ver. 9. This word is פְדוּיֵי from פָּדָה; though it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to designate the difference in the sense. Doubtless there was a shade of difference among the Hebrews, but what it was is not now known. See this word explained in the Note on ch. i. 27. The *language* here is all derived from the deliverance from Babylon, and the images employed by the prophet relate to that event. Still, there can be no doubt that he meant to describe the deliverance under the Messiah. ¶ *Shall return, and come to Zion.* This language also is that which expresses the return from Babylon. In a more general sense, and in the sense intended particularly by the prophet, it means, doubtless, that *all* who are the redeemed of God shall be gathered under his protection, and shall be saved. ¶ *With songs.* With rejoicing—as the ransomed captives would return from Babylon, and as all who are redeemed enter the church on earth, and will enter into heaven above. ¶ *And everlasting joy upon their heads.* This *may be* an expression denoting the fact that joy is manifest in the face and aspect (Gesenius). Thus we say that joy lights up the countenance, and it is possible that the Hebrews expressed this idea by applying it to the head. Thus the Hebrews say (Ps. cxxvi. 2):

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.

Or it may refer to the practice of *anointing* the head with oil and perfume in times of festivity and joy—in contrast with the custom of throwing ashes on the head in times of grief and calamity (Rosenmüller). Or it may refer to a custom of wearing a wreath or chaplet of flowers in times of festivity, as is often done now, and as was commonly done among the ancients in triumphal processions (Vitringa). Whichever exposition be adopted, the idea is the same, that there would be great joy, and that that joy would be perpetual and unfading. This is true of all who return to Zion under the Messiah. *Joy* is one of the first emotions; joy at redemption, and at the pardon of sin; joy in view of the hopes of eternal life, and of the everlasting favour of God. But this joy is not short-lived and fading, like the garland of flowers on the head; it is constant, increasing, everlasting. ¶ *And sorrow and sighing shall flee away* (see Note on ch. xxv. 8).

This is a most beautiful close of the *series* or succession of prophecies which we have been thus far contemplating. The result of all is, that the redeemed

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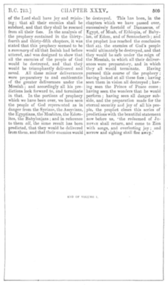

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of the Lord shall have joy and rejoicing; that all their enemies shall be subdued, and that they shall be rescued from all their foes. In the analysis of the prophecy contained in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters, it was stated that this prophecy seemed to be a *summary* of all that Isaiah had before uttered, and was designed to show that all the enemies of the people of God would be destroyed, and that they would be triumphantly delivered and saved. All these minor deliverances were preparatory to and emblematic of the greater deliverance under the Messiah; and accordingly all his predictions look forward to, and terminate in that. In the portions of prophecy which we have been over, we have seen the people of God represented as in danger from the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Babylonians; and in reference to them *all*, the same result has been predicted, that they would be delivered from them, and that their enemies would be destroyed. This has been, in the chapters which we have passed over, successively foretold of Damascus, of Egypt, of Moab, of Ethiopia, of Babylon, of Edom, and of Sennacherib; and the prophet has reached the conclusion that ALL the enemies of God's people would ultimately be destroyed, and that they would be safe under the reign of the Messiah, to which all their deliverances were preparatory, and in which they all would terminate. Having pursued this course of the prophecy; having looked at all these foes; having seen them in vision all destroyed; having seen the Prince of Peace come; having seen the wonders that he would perform; having seen all danger subside, and the preparation made for the eternal security and joy of all his people, the prophet closes this series of predictions with the beautiful statement now before us, 'the redeemed of JEHOVAH shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

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