

The Book Of Malachi

A Commentary Dr John Gill

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MALACHI

A Commentary by Dr. John Gill

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INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is called “Sepher Malachi”, the Book of Malachi; in the Vulgate Latin version, “the Prophecy of Malachi”; in the Syriac and Arabic versions, “the Prophecy of the Prophet Malachi”; According to Lactantius {a}, Zechariah was the last of the prophets; but the more commonly received opinion, and the truest, is, that Malachi was the last; hence Aben Ezra calls him *וְעַד הַנְּבִיאִים*, “the end of the prophets”; and by Kimchi he is said to be, *אֲחֵרֵיהֶם שְׁבַם*, “the last of them”; and sometimes, by the Rabbins, *חוֹתֵם הַנְּבִיאִים*, “the seal of the prophets” {b}; by whom they are all sealed up, concluded, and finished. His name signifies “my angel”, as is commonly said; though Hillerus {c} makes it to signify “the angel of the Lord”; hence some have thought that he was not a man, but an angel; and so the Septuagint render *בְּיַד מַלְאָכִי*, in the first verse Mal 1:1, “by the hand of his angel”; and others have thought that the book takes its name, not from the author of it, but from the mention that is made of the messenger or angel of the Lord, John the Baptist, in Mal 3:1 but the more prevailing opinion is, that Malachi is the name of a man, the writer of the book, about whom the Jews have been divided. Rab Nachman says Malachi was Mordecai; and that he was so called because he was second to the king. R. Joshua ben Korcha contradicts him, and affirms Malachi is Ezra; and to him agrees the Chaldee paraphrase on Mal 1:1 which says, that Malachi, his name is called Ezra the scribe; but, as Kimchi observes, Ezra is never called a prophet, as Malachi is, only a scribe; wherefore in the Talmud {d}, where this matter is debated, it is concluded thus; but the wise men say, Malachi is his name; that is, it is the proper name of a man; there was a man of this name, that wrote this prophecy; not Mordecai, nor Ezra, nor Zerubbabel, nor Nehemiah, as some have thought; but Malachi: and if the accounts of Epiphanius {e} and Isidore {f} are to be credited, this prophet was born at Sapho, in the tribe of Zebulun; and had his name from his beautiful form, and unblemished life; and that he died very young, and was buried in his own field. The time of his prophesying is not agreed on: the Jews commonly make him contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah; they say {g} that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of them prophesied in the second year of Darius; and Ganz, their chronologer {h}, places the death of these prophets together in one year; but he seems to be later than they: Haggai prophesied before the building of the temple; Zechariah about the time of it; and Malachi after it, when the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored and settled; and when both priests and people were become very corrupt and degenerate, of which he complains; so that it is

possible that he might live a century after the other prophets, and about four centuries before the coming of Christ, during which time prophecy ceased; though some think he lived not long before the times of Christ, which is not probable. Bishop Usher {i} makes him contemporary with Nehemiah, and places him in the year 416 B.C.; and Mr. Whiston {k} in the year 400 B.C.; Mr. Bedford {l} in the year 424 B.C.: however, this book has been always accounted authentic, and a part of the canon of the Scripture; and is confirmed by the passages cited out of it, and the references made unto it, in the New Testament, \Mt 11:10 Mr 1:2 Ro 9:1\ \Mt 17:12 Mr 9:11,12 Lu 1:17\ . The general design of it is to reprove the Jews for their ingratitude to the Lord, their neglect and contempt of his worship, and breach of his laws; and to raise in the minds of the truly godly an expectation of the Messiah, and his forerunner, John the Baptist.

{a} De vera Sapientia, l. 4. c. 5. p. 279. {b} Nizzachon, p. 200. apud Hottinger. Thes. Phil. p. 489. {c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 147, 359, 541. {d} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1. {e} De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 22. {f} De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 51. {g} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55. {h} Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 1. {i} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3589. {k} Chronological Tables, cent. 12. {l} Scripture Chronology, p. 725.

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 1

In this chapter the Lord declares his love to the people of Israel, and proves it; and complains that the honour due unto him was not given him; which he demonstrates by various instances. The inscription is in Mal 1:1 showing the name and nature of the prophecy; the author of it; the people to whom it was sent; and the name of the person by whom. In Mal 1:2 the Lord affirms his love to the people of Israel, which they called in question; and proves it to be real, special, and distinguishing, by the instance of Jacob and Esau, two brothers; yet one, their ancestor, was loved, and the other hated; which latter is proved by the desolations made in his country, and by the fruitless attempts made to repair and rebuild; which was so clear a proof of the Lord's indignation against him, that the Israelites could not but see it, and would be obliged to confess it, to the glory of God, Mal 1:3-5 hence he passes on to observe the honour and fear that were due to him as a Father and master, which were not shown him; but, instead thereof, he was despised, and even by the priests themselves, with which they are charged, Mal 1:6 and which being objected to by them, is proved by

offering polluted bread on his altar; and by polluting him, in saying his table was contemptible; and by sacrificing the blind, the lame, and the sick, unto him; things which would be justly resented, if offered to a temporal prince and governor, Mal 1:7,8 wherefore they are called upon by the prophet to pray to the Lord for grace and mercy for the people, seeing it was by their means (the priests) that these things were done; though it was questionable whether the Lord would have any regard to them, Mal 1:9 their sins being so dreadfully aggravated; and particularly, inasmuch as they did not serve in the temple, not so much as shut a door, or kindle a fire on the altar, for nothing, without being paid for it; hence the Lord declares he had no pleasure in them, nor would he accept their offerings; but would call the Gentiles by his grace, among whom his name would be great from one end of the earth to the other; and incense and pure offerings would be offered by them to him, Mal 1:10,11 and then he renews the charge against them, that they had profaned his name, by saying that his table, and the fruit thereof, were polluted, and his meat contemptible; by expressing a weariness in his worship, and a contempt of it; and by bringing the torn, the lame, and sick, as an offering to him, Mal 1:12,13 upon which such sacrificers are declared deceivers, and pronounced accursed, which they might assure themselves was and would be their case; since he was a great King, and his name dreadful among the Heathen, Mal 1:14.

Malachi 1:1

The burden of the word of the Lord

By which is meant the prophecy of this book, so called, not because heavy, burdensome, and distressing, either for the prophet to carry, or the people to bear; for some part of it, which respects Christ, and his forerunner, was matter of joy to the people of God; but because it was a message sent by the Lord, and carried by the prophet to the people; (See Gill on Zechariah 9:1) (See Gill on Zechariah 12:1) and this was not the word of man, but of God, a part of Scripture, by divine inspiration. The Syriac version is, “the vision of the words of the Lord”: and the Arabic version, “the revelation of the word of the Lord”; and the Septuagint version, “the assumption of the word of the Lord”; it was what was revealed, made known, and delivered by the Lord to the prophet, and taken up by him, and carried to Israel, which was the general name of all the twelve tribes, when under one prince; but when the kingdom was divided, in Rehoboam’s time, it was peculiar to the ten tribes, as Judah was to the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah; but after the return of these two from the Babylonish captivity, in which they

were joined by some of the other tribes, it was given unto them as here: by Malachi;

or, “by the hand of Malachi” F13; he was the instrument the Lord made use of; the person whom he sent, and by whom he delivered the following prophecy.

FOOTNOTES:

F13 (בִּיָּד) “in manu”, V. L. Cocceius; “per manum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Malachi 1:2

I have loved you, saith the Lord

Which appeared of old, by choosing them, above all people upon the face of the earth, to be his special and peculiar people; by bestowing peculiar favours and blessings upon them, both temporal and spiritual; by continuing them a people, through a variety of changes and revolutions; and by lately bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, restoring their land unto them, and the pure worship of God among them:

Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us?

the Targum renders it, “and if ye should say”; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech; which intimates, that though they might not have expressed themselves in so many words, yet they seemed disposed to say so; they thought it, if they said it not; and therefore, to prevent such an objection, as well as to show their ingratitude, it is put in this form; and an instance of his love is demanded, which is very surprising, when they had so many; and shows great stupidity and unthankfulness. Abarbinel renders the words, “wherefore hast thou loved us?” that is, is there not a reason to be given for loving us? which he supposes was the love of Abraham to God; and therefore his love to them was not free, but by way of reward to Abraham’s love; and consequently they were not so much obliged to him for it: to which is replied,

[was] not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord;

Jacob and Esau were brethren; they had one and the same father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah, and equally descended from Abraham; so that if one was loved for the sake of Abraham, as suggested, according to Abarbinel’s sense, the other had an equal claim to it; they lay in the same womb together; they were twins; and if any could be thought to have the advantage by birth, Esau had it, being born first: but before they were born,

and before they had done good or evil, what is afterwards said of them was in the heart of God towards them; which shows that the love of God to his people is free, sovereign, and distinguishing, (Genesis 25:23) (Romans 9:11-13) :

yet I loved Jacob;

personally considered; not only by giving him the temporal birthright and blessing, and the advantages arising from thence; but by choosing him to everlasting life, bestowing his grace upon him, revealing Christ unto him, and making him a partaker of eternal happiness; and also his posterity, as appears by the above instances mentioned; and likewise mystically considered, for all the elect, redeemed, and called, go by the name of Jacob and Israel in Scripture frequently; for what is here said of Jacob is true of all the individuals of God's people; for which purpose the apostle refers to this passage in (Romans 9:13) , to prove the sovereignty and distinction of the love of God in their election and salvation: and this is indeed a clear proof that the love of God to his people is entirely free from all motives and conditions in them, being before they had done either good or evil; and therefore did not arise from any goodness in them, nor from their love to him nor from any good works done by them: the choice of persons to everlasting life, the fruit of this love, is denied to be of works, and is ascribed to grace; it passed before any were wrought; and what are done by the best of men are the effects of it; and the persons chosen or passed by were in an equal state when both were done; which appears by this instance: and by which also it is manifest that the love of God to men is distinguishing; it is not alike to all men; there is a peculiar favour he bears to own people; which is evident by the choice of some, and not others; by the redemption of them out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; by the effectual calling of them out of the world; by the application of the blessings of grace unto them; and by bestowing eternal life on them: and it may be further observed, that the objects of God's love have not always the knowledge of it; indeed they have no knowledge of it before conversion, which is the open time of love; and after conversion they have not always distinct and appropriating views of it; only when God is pleased to come and manifest it unto them.

Malachi 1:3

And I hated Esau

Or, "rejected" him, as the Targum; did not love him as Jacob: this was

a negative, not positive hatred; it is true of him, personally considered; not only by taking away the birthright and blessing from him, which he despised; but by denying him his special grace, leaving him in his sins, and to his lusts, so that he became a profane person; shared not in the grace of God here, and had no part in the eternal inheritance with the saints in light; and likewise it is true of his posterity, as the following instances show:

and laid his mountains and his heritage waste;

which, according to Grotius, was done by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the captivity of the Jews, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, (Jeremiah 49:7-22) but this was done by the Nabatheans F14: Mount Seir was the famous mountain that Esau dwelt in, (Genesis 36:8) there might be more in his country; or this might have many tops, and therefore called “mountains”; and to this account of the waste and desolate state of this country agrees what is at present related of it, by a late traveller F15 in those parts:

“if (says he) we leave Palestine and Egypt behind us, and pursue our physical observations into the land of Edom, we shall be presented with a variety of prospects, quite different from those we have lately met with in the land of Canaan, or in the field of Zoan; for we cannot here be entertained with pastures clothed with flocks, or with valleys standing thick with corn, or with brooks of water, or fountains, or depths that spring out of valleys and hills, (Deuteronomy 8:7) here is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or pomegranates, (Numbers 20:5) but the whole is an “evil place”, a lonesome desolate wilderness; no otherwise diversified than by plains covered with sand, and by mountains made up of naked rocks and precipices, (Malachi 1:3) neither is this country ever (unless sometimes at the equinoxes) refreshed with rain; but the few hardy vegetables it produces are stunted by a perpetual drought; and the nourishment which the dews contribute to them in the night, is sufficiently impaired by the powerful heat of the sun in the day:”

Though this country seems to have been originally more fruitful, and better cultivated, as may be concluded from (Genesis 27:39) (Numbers 20:17) but is become so through the judgments of God upon it:

for the dragons of the wilderness;

so called to distinguish them from sea dragons, or the dragon fish; such

as whales and crocodiles, which are sometimes expressed by the same word here used, (Genesis 1:21) (Ezekiel 29:3) and these land dragons are no other than serpents of an enormous size. In the Indies they used to be distinguished into three sorts; such as were found in the mountains; such as were bred in caves, or in the flat country; and such as were found in fens and marshes. The first is the largest of all, and are covered with scales as resplendent as polished gold; these have a kind of beard hanging from their lower jaw; their eyebrows large, and very exactly arched; their aspect the most frightful that can be imagined; and their cry loud and shrill; their crest of a bright yellow; and a protuberance on their heads of the colour of a burning coal. Those of the flat country differ from the former in nothing but having their scales of a silver colour, and in their frequenting rivers, to which the former never come. Those that live in marshes and fens are of a dark colour, approaching to a black, move slowly, have no crest, or any rising on their heads F16; these creatures commonly inhabit desert places. So Diodorus Siculus F17, speaking of Ethiopia, says, it is reported that various kinds of serpents, and of an incredible size, are seen near the desert, had in places inhabited by wild beasts; and Aelianus F18 describes the dragon as dwelling in woods, and living on poisonous herbs; and preferring a desolate place to cities, and the habitations of men; and when in Scripture it is predicted of countries and cities that they shall become desolate, it is usually observed, that they shall be the dwelling places of dragons, as in (Isaiah 13:22) (34:13) (Jeremiah 10:22) (49:33) (51:37) so here it is foretold that it should be the case of Edom, as it has been, and still continues to be, as appears from the above traveller F19; who, passing through some part of this country, says of it,

“vipers, especially in the wilderness of Sin, which might be very properly called “the inheritance of dragons”, were very dangerous and troublesome; not only our camels, but the Arabs who attended them, running every moment the risk of being bitten;”

so that, according to the prediction, it is now a place for such creatures. A learned Jew F20 is of opinion, that not serpents, but jackals, are here meant, which are a sort of wild howling beasts, that live abroad in desolate places; (See Gill on Micah 1:8) but whether they be the one, or the other, it makes for the same purpose, to denote what a desert place Edom would become; since it should be inhabited by such creatures to dwell in, which denotes the utter desolation made. So the Targum renders it, “into the

wasteness of the desert”; or into a waste desert, where none but such sort of animals inhabit. The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it, “into the houses”, or “cottages, of the desert”: and now, though this was the case of Judea, that it was left desolate, yet it was but for a while; at the end of seventy years the Jews returned to their own land, and dwelt in it; but so did not the Edomites, as appears by the following words; which shows the regard God had to the posterity of Jacob, and not to the posterity of Esau.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 See Prideaux’s Connexion, par. 2. B. 3. p. 199.

F15 Dr. Shaw’s Travels, p. 438. Ed. 2.

F16 Harris’s Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 474.

F17 Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 169.

F18 De Animal. l. 6. c. 63.

F19 Dr. Shaw Travels, p. 448. Ed. 2.

F20 Tanchum apud Pocock in loc.

Malachi 1:4

Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished

Or the Idumeans, as the Targum; the posterity of Esau, who acknowledge themselves greatly reduced by the desolations made in their country, cities, towns, and houses, being plundered of all their valuable things. Kimchi interprets it, if the congregation of Edom should say, though we are become poor and low, and our land is laid waste:

but we will return;

being now become rich, as the Targum adds; that is, as Jarchi explains it, with the spoils of Jerusalem:

and build the desolate places:

as Israel did, as Kimchi observes, when they returned from their captivity; and so the Edomites hoped to do the same: thus saith the Lord of hosts,

They shall build, but I will throw down;

they attempted to build again their cities and towns, but could not succeed, God was against them:

and they shall call them;

or, “they shall be called” F21; this shall be the name they, shall go by among men, by way of proverb and reproach: The border of wickedness; a wicked kingdom and nation, from one end to the other; this shall be

said of them, as the reason of their utter and perpetual desolation: and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever;

not for seventy years only, as against the Jews, (Zechariah 1:12) , but forever; and these are now no more a people; they are utterly extinct; their name and nation are lost; there is not the least appearance of them; when the Jews, though they are scattered about in the world, yet they are still a people, and distinct from all others.

FOOTNOTES:

F21 (וּקְרָאוּ לְהֵם) “et vocabuntur”, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Grotius.

Malachi 1:5

And your eyes shall see

The destruction of the Edomites, and their fruitless attempts to rebuild their desolate places; and the difference between them and the Israelites, who were returned to their own land, and inherited it, when they could not; and the love of God to the one, and his hatred of the other:

and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel;

Aben Ezra interprets it, ye that dwelt in the border of Israel shall say, the Lord shall be magnified, or let him be magnified; let greatness and glory be ascribed to him for what he has done: or, as Kimchi, give him praise and greatness because you are dwelling in your border, and their border is desolate; and your border is called the border of Israel, but theirs the border of wickedness; and so the Targum,

“let the glory of the Lord be multiplied, because he hath enlarged the border of Israel;”

and, according to Jarchi, the sense is, he shall show his greatness from our border, to make it known that we are his people: all show and own that God had loved them more than others, and therefore they ought to have honoured and obeyed him, in which they were deficient, and so ungrateful.

Malachi 1:6

A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master,

&c.] Or, “will honour”, or “should honour”; it is their duty to do so, both

according to the laws of God and man; and so the Targum,

“lo concerning a son it is said (or commanded) that he should honour his father; and of a servant, that he should fear (or show reverence) before his master;”

see (Exodus 20:12) (Ephesians 6:5) :

if then I [be] a Father;

as he was the Father of his divine and eternal Son; the Father of spirits, angels, and the souls of men; the Father of all men by creation; and the Father of all mercies to them in providence, as he was to Israel; and, besides, was their Father by national adoption, as he was not to other people; and to many of them stood in this relation by special adopting grace:

where [is] mine honour?

there is an honour due to God on account of this relation; which should be shown by loving him, trusting in him, calling upon him, imitating and obeying him, and by making use of what he has given for his glory; he is to be honoured in heart and life, by words and actions, and with our substance. This question suggests, that he had not the honour given him, which belonged unto him:

and if I [be] a master;

the word is in the plural number, and may be understood of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; though the first Person seems rather designed, who stands in this relation to Christ, as Mediator; to the angels, his ministering spirits; to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all the saints; and indeed to all men, and particularly to the Israelites; as appeared by the special laws and commands he enjoined them, and by his special government, protection, and care of them:

where [is] my fear?

fear and reverence are due to the Lord from his people, considered in such a relation to them; not a slavish fear of wrath and punishment; but a godly filial fear, which is influenced by the goodness of God, and appears in a carefulness not to offend him, and by the performance of all religious worship, both private and public; and in this not only natural men, but professors of religion, and even God’s own people, are wanting; yea, those that should set examples to others, as men in public office, and of a public character, as follows:

saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name;

for what is before said is not only said to the people in general; but to the priests in particular, who ought to have honoured and feared the Lord; and yet they despised his name, or made it contemptible; by not paying that regard to his authority, as a Father and master, they ought; by neglecting his worship, and not taking that care of offerings and sacrifices as became them: **and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?**

as if they were entirely innocent and guiltless.

Malachi 1:7

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar

Which some understand of the shewbread, mention being afterwards made of a “table”, as Jerom; who observes that it was made of wheat, which the priests themselves sowed, reaped, ground, and baked, and so could take what they would out of it: as for their sowing it, it does not seem likely that they should be employed in such service, whatever may be said for their reaping; since the sheaf of the first fruits was reaped by persons deputed from the sanhedrim F23; though of the reaping of that for the shewbread, I find no mention made; but as for grinding, sifting, kneading, and making it into loaves, and baking it, and taking it out of the oven, and putting it upon the table of shewbread, all this was the work of the priests F24; and those of the house of Garmu F25 were appointed over that work: now, this bread might be said to be polluted, when they set upon the table such as was not made of fine wheat flour, and had not pure frankincense put upon or by each row, as the law required, (Leviticus 24:5 Leviticus 24:7) nor is it any material objection to this sense, that it is an altar, and not a table, on which this bread was offered; since, as the altar is called a table, (Ezekiel 41:22) , as this is in a following clause, the table may be called an altar; though it may be observed, that the shewbread is never said to be offered, but to be set, or put upon the table: indeed the burning of the frankincense set by it is called an offering made by fire unto the Lord, (Leviticus 24:7) wherefore others interpret this of the daily meat offering, which went along with the daily sacrifice of the lambs, and part of which was burnt on the altar, (Exodus 29:40-42) or rather this designs sacrifice in general, sometimes called “bread”, (Leviticus 3:11 Leviticus 3:16) (21:6) and so the Targum here,

“ye offer upon my altar an abominable offering;”

such as had blemishes in them, were blind or lame, as after mentioned; and had not the requisites of a sacrifice in them; or were offered not in a right manner, or by bad men, and with a wicked mind:

and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?

thy bread offering or altar; as if their offerings were pure, and they themselves, and their consciences pure from sin. The answer is,

In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible;

either the shewbread table, which yet was covered with gold, and all the vessels of it made of gold; or the altar, as in (Ezekiel 41:22) their actions spoke so loud, and declared that the table or altar of the Lord was a contemptible thing, since they cared not what was offered upon it: or the reason why it was had in contempt, as some think, was because there was not that holiness in the second temple as in the first: or, as Abarbinel and Kimchi say, because of the fat and the blood which were offered on the altar, which they esteemed contemptible things; not observing the end for which the Lord commanded them to be offered.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3.

F24 Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 5. sect. 6.

F25 Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.

Malachi 1:8

And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil?

&c.] Certainly it is, according to the law in (Leviticus 22:22) or, as Kimchi interprets it, when they bring to you a lamb that is blind for sacrifice to offer it up, ye say, this is not evil; but it is good to offer it up, because the table is contemptible. The sense is, that, however evil this may be in itself, according to them it was good enough to be offered up upon the altar; which proves that they despised the name of the Lord, offered polluted bread or sacrifice on his altar, and had his table in contempt:

and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil?

verily it is, by the law of God, which forbids the offering of such things, (Leviticus 22:21 Leviticus 22:22) (Deuteronomy 15:21) this was always observed, in all sacrifices under the law, that they were perfect, and without any blemish, whether of the flock, or of the herd; and this was strictly observed, even by the Heathens themselves: so Achilles, in Homer F1, speaks of the perfect lambs and goats they offered in sacrifice; and particularly they were not to be lame, or to halt; such were reckoned

choice and excellent sacrifices, which were larger and better fed than others; and which were not lame, nor diseased, nor sickly; for things future could not be known, they say, but from a sound victim F2; for they pretended to have knowledge of them, by the entrails of the sacrifices. So Pliny F3 observes, that this is to be remarked, that calves brought to the altar on men's shoulders are not to be sacrificed; nor are the gods appeased by one that halts; in short, it is said F4, whatever is not perfect and sound is not to be offered to them; and, besides these here mentioned in the text, there were many others, which the Jews especially observed, which rendered creatures unfit for sacrifice. Maimonides F5 reckons up no less than fifty blemishes, by reason of which the priests under the law might not offer a creature for sacrifice: no doubt but the laws of Moses concerning this matter had a respect to the pure, perfect, and spotless sacrifice of Christ, which the legal ones were typical of; and teach us this lesson, that, without a complete sacrifice, no atonement or satisfaction for sin could be made: or, it is not evil in your eyes, as Aben Ezra glosses it; which is the same as before:

offer it now unto thy governor;

to Zerubbabel, who was governor of Judea at this time, (Haggai 1:1) for they had no king. The meaning is, offer a lamb or any other creature that is blind, sick, and lame; make a present of it to him that had the government of them; make trial this way, and see how acceptable it would be to him:

will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts;

will he thank thee for it, or have any respect to thee on account of it? but, on the contrary, will he not resent it as an affront to him? and if so it would be with an earthly prince, how can it be thought that to offer the blind, lame, and sick, should be acceptable to the King of kings, and Lord of lords?

FOOTNOTES:

F1 Iliad. I. 1. 66.

F2 Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. 1. 3. c. 12.

F3 Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 45.

F4 Scholia in Aristoph. Acharn. Act 3. Scen. 3. p. 409.

F5 Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1. &c.

Malachi 1:9

And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us

These are the words of the prophet to the priests; and are spoken

either seriously, exhorting them to that part of their office which lay in interceding for the people that God would be gracious to them, and forgive their sins; and the rather, inasmuch as they had been the means of their sin, and accessory to it, who ought to have reprov'd them for bringing such offerings, and should have refused to offer them for them; or otherwise, if they did not do this, they could not expect that God would accept their persons, and their offerings: or else ironically, now you have offered such sacrifices to the Lord, as the blind, the lame, and sick, go and intercede for the people; pray that their sins may be forgiven them, and that the curse may be removed from them, and see how you will succeed:

this hath been by your means;

that such sacrifices were offered up; they indulg'd the people in such practices, and encourag'd them; the fault was theirs; or this curse, as Kimchi explains it, from (Malachi 1:14) :

will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts;

can you ever imagine that God will have any respect to your persons or prayers, when you have acted so vile a part, and been the cause of so much sin and evil? no, he will not, as is asserted in the following verse (Malachi 1:10) .

Malachi 1:10

Who [is there] even among you that would shut the doors [for nought]?

&c.] Either of the temple, as the Targum and Jarchi; for at each of the gates of the temple there were porters appointed in David's time, (1 Chronicles 26:1-19) and who were paid for their service: or of the court, as Kimchi; the court of the priests where the offerings were brought. The words "for nought" are not, in the original text, at the end of this clause, but at the end of the next; and are by some referred to both; and by others restrained to the latter; and who give this as the sense of the words, "who is there", or "would there were any among you?" F6 any good man that would shut the doors of the temple, that so a man might not bring an abominable offering; intimating, that the priests or Levites however, who were porters, ought to shut the doors against such persons; and this way go Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; to which the Chaldee paraphrase inclines; which is,

''who is there among you that will shut the door of the house of my sanctuary, that ye may not offer on mine altar an abominable sacrifice?"

but the same writers, out of an ancient book called Torath Cohanim, observe a sense that agrees with ours,

“a man says to his friend, shut this door for me, he desires nothing for it; light me this candle, he asks no reward for it; but as for you, who is there among you that will shut my doors for nought? or kindle a fire on mine altar for nought? and how much less will ye do freely those things which used to be done for reward? therefore I have no pleasure in you.”

There were four and twenty porters to open and shut the doors of the mountain of the house, or the temple, and the court of women in the daytime; six on the east side; four on the north; four on the south; at Asuppim two and two, four in all; four on the west, and two at Parbar {g}: here they attended in the daytime, to keep the place pure and peaceable; and there seems to have been one over all the rest, whose business was to see that the doors at evening were shut by them: in the Misnah F8 we are told that Ben Geber was appointed over the shutting of the gates, i.e. of the temple; and at night there were four and twenty guards also that kept watch; the priests kept guard in three places; in the room “abtines”, in the room “nitsots”, and in the fire room; and one and twenty Levites; five at the five gates of the mountain of the house, or the compass of the temple; four at the four corners within; five at the five gates of the court; and four at its four corners without; one at the chamber “Corban”; one at the chamber over against the vail; and another behind the most holy place; and there was one that was called the man of the mountain of the house, who every night went through every ward with torches burning before him; and he had power to beat those he found asleep in their watch, and to burn their garments F9, to which the allusion is, (Revelation 16:15) , and these guards, as Bartenora F11 observes, were not on account of thieves and robbers, but for the honour of the house; and these, neither the one by day, nor the other by night, did their work for nought, but had a maintenance allowed them for it: **neither do ye kindle fire upon mine altar for nought:**

and this was done every morning, for though, as one of the Jewish writers says F12, fire came down, from heaven, it was ordered that they should bring of common fire; and there were three piles or rows of fire made every day upon the altar; the first was a large one, on which they offered the daily sacrifice, with the rest of the offerings; the second was on the side of it, a little one, from whence they took fire in the censer to burn incense every day; the third had no other use for it but to confirm the

command concerning fire; as it is said, “the fire shall ever be burning”, (Leviticus 6:13) F13 and this fire was kindled to burn the sacrifices, the daily sacrifice, and other burnt offerings, for which they were paid out of the tithes, and other oblations; see (1 Corinthians 9:13) this was an aggravation of their negligence and carelessness about what offerings were brought and sacrificed; seeing they were so well taken care of, and such a sufficient maintenance provided for them; so that they did not the least piece of service in the temple but they were fully rewarded for it; even not so much as to shut a door, or kindle a fire; and therefore it is no wonder their conduct should be resented, as follows:

I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts;

neither in your persons, nor in your offerings:

neither will I accept an offering at your hand:

the “minchah” or meat offering, any meat offering, particularly that which was offered morning and evening with the daily sacrifice, (Exodus 29:40 Exodus 29:41) and it is sometimes used particularly for the evening meat offering, (2 Kings 16:15) or rather, “a wheat” or “bread offering”; since this offering was made of fine flour, with oil poured upon it, and frankincense put upon that, (Leviticus 2:1) hence mention is made of “incense” in the next verse (Malachi 1:11) ; and it was either baked in an oven, or fried in a pan; and either way, when it was brought to the priest, it was burnt on the altar, and was an offering by fire to the Lord, and of a sweet savour to him, when rightly performed; and was a figure of the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God; and this passage respects Gospel times, as appears from the following verse (Malachi 1:11) , when Christ’s sacrifice would be offered up, and so the oblation or meat offering made to cease, (Daniel 9:27) hence God would not accept of it any more; or else because not rightly offered, as it was not when any leaven was mixed with it, or that and honey were burnt with it; signifying it should be offered with sincerity, and without hypocrisy, and other carnal lusts; and indeed no legal sacrifices were acceptable to God but such as were offered up in the faith of Christ, and with a view to his sacrifice, without trusting to, and depending upon, the outward offering, as hypocrites and carnal persons did: wherefore to this is opposed a pure “minchah” or meat offering in the next verse (Malachi 1:11) ; which designs spiritual sacrifices, such as are now offered up under the Gospel dispensation; when offering and sacrifice of a ceremonial kind God desires not; he will have no more offered up; he takes no pleasure in them; they are not acceptable to him, being superseded by the sacrifice of his Son, they were types of; see (Psalms 40:6) (Hebrews 10:5 Hebrews 10:6) and

agreeably to which passages the words may be understood, as expressing the Lord's rejection of legal sacrifices in general among the Jews, which he would have no longer continued than till the Messiah came; by whose sufferings and death the daily sacrifice was caused to cease, (Daniel 9:27) (Hosea 3:4) when sacrifices of another kind should be offered up in the Gentile world, through every part of it, as in the following verse (Malachi 1:11) .

FOOTNOTES:

F6 (מִי גַם בְּכֶם) “utinam vestrum aliquis”, Gataker, Drusius.

F7 Kimchi in 1 Chron. xxvi. 1.

F8 Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.

F9 Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

F11 In Misn. ib.

F12 Baal Hatturim in Lev. vi. 13.

F13 Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 4.

Malachi 1:11

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same

From east to west, which is all habitable; not so north and south, as Kimchi observes, the extremes of which are not habitable. Abarbinel thinks that (מ) in (מִמּוֹרָחַ) is causal; and that the sense is, because of the motion of the sun in rising and setting, the Gentiles acknowledge God to be the first mover and cause of all things; and who, though they worship the host of heaven, yet ultimately direct their worship to the supreme Being, the Cause of causes; and supposes this to be a reproof of the priests, who might have learnt better even of the very Heathens; but the former is to the true sense, which declares the large extent of true spiritual worship in the Gentile world:

my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles;

through the preaching of the Gospel, attended with the spirit and power of God to the conversion of many; whereby he himself is made known, and the perfections of his nature, and his several names, and particularly that of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus; who, as such, is called upon, and greatness and glory are ascribed unto him for the gift of his Son, and the mission of him into the world, to be the Saviour of Gentiles as well as of Jews:

and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name;

some Jewish writers understand this of Israelites, the disciples of the wise men, studying in the law, and putting up their evening prayers to God, in every place where they live among the Gentiles; which are as acceptable to God as if they offered incense, and a pure offering; this way goes Jarchi, to which agrees the Targum; and this sense is given in the Talmud F14, and other writings of theirs; but Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, interpret it of the Gentiles, though in different ways, and foreign from the sense of the text; which is, that not in Jerusalem the worship of God should be as formerly, but in all places in the Gentile world, and where particularly prayer should be made to God; see (John 4:20 John 4:21 John 4:23) (1 Timothy 2:8) comparable to incense for its fervency, fragrancy, and gratefulness, (Psalms 141:2) (Revelation 8:3 Revelation 8:4) :

and a pure offering;

meaning either the Gentiles themselves, their souls and bodies, (Isaiah 66:20) (Psalms 51:17) (Romans 12:1) or their sacrifices of praise, good works, and alms deeds (Hebrews 13:15 Hebrews 13:16) which, though imperfect, and not free from sin, may be said to be “pure”, proceeding from a pure heart, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and offered in a pure and spiritual manner, and through the pure incense of Christ’s mediation:

for my name [shall be] great among; the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts;

which is repeated for the certainty of it.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 110. 1. Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.

Malachi 1:12**But ye have profaned it**

That is, the name of the Lord, which they are said to despise, (Malachi 1:6) and pollute, (Malachi 1:7) and is a reason why they and their offerings were rejected: and that they profaned the name of the Lord appears by this,

in that ye say, The table of the Lord [is] polluted:

the same with “contemptible”, (Malachi 1:7) as Kimchi observes; (See Gill on Malachi 1:7):

and the fruit thereof, [even] his meat is contemptible;

the word for fruit F15 sometimes is used for speech, the fruit of the

lips, (Isaiah 57:19) and taken in this sense here, as it is by some, may be understood either of the word of God, which commanded such and such sacrifices to be offered up upon the altar, and was despised, so Abarbinel: or the word of the priests, who were continually saying that what was offered up on the altar was contemptible, even the food which they ate of; so Jarchi and Kimchi. “Fruit” and “meat” seem to signify one and the same thing, and design the fruit and meat of the altar; either that which belonged to the Lord, the fat and the blood, which were offered to him, and were reckoned contemptible; or that which fell to the share of the priests, which they thought mean and worthless. Cocceius interprets this of Christ the Branch of the Lord, and fruit of the earth, (Isaiah 4:2) whose meat it was to do the will of him that sent him, and was despised and rejected by the Jews; and which was the reason of God’s casting them off, and taking in the Gentiles.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 (יִבֵּן) “et verbum ejus”, Pagninus, Munster; “sermo ejus, [vel] eorum”, Vatablus; so Ben Melech.

Malachi 1:13

Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness [is it]?

&c.] These are either the words of the priests, saying what a wearisome and fatiguing business the temple service was to them, for which they thought they were poorly paid; such as slaying the sacrifices; removing the ashes from the altar; putting the wood in order; kindling the fire, and laying the sacrifice on it: or of the people that brought the sacrifice, who, when they brought a lamb upon their shoulders, and laid it down, said, how weary are we with bringing it, suggesting it was so fat and fleshy; so Kimchi and Abarbinel, to which sense the Targum seems to agree; which paraphrases it,

“but if ye say, lo, what we have brought is from our labour;”

and so the Syriac version, “and ye say, this is from our labour”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “and ye say, lo, from labour”; and the Septuagint version, “and ye say, these are from affliction”; meaning that what they brought was with great toil and labour, out of great poverty, misery, and affliction:

and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts;

or, “blown it” {ק}; filled it with wind, that it might seem fat and fleshy, when it was poor and lean; so Abarbinel and Abendana: or ye have puffed, and panted, and blown, as persons weary with bringing such a heavy lamb, when it was so poor and light, that, if it was blown at, it would fall to the ground; so R. Joseph Kimchi: or ye have puffed at it, thrown it upon the ground by way of contempt; so David Kimchi: or, “ye have grieved him” F17; the owner of the lamb, from whom they stole it; which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech; taking the word rendered “torn”, in the next clause, for that which was “stolen”. Jarchi says this is one of the eighteen words corrected by the scribes; and that instead of (אורו) , “it”, it should be read (אורתי) , “me”: and the whole rendered, “and ye have grieved me”; the Lord, by bringing such sacrifices, and complaining of weariness, and by their hypocrisy and deceitfulness. Cocceius renders the words, “ye have made him to expire”; meaning the Messiah, whom the Jews put to death:

and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the

sick; (See Gill on Malachi 1:8) and if the first word is rendered “stolen”, as it may, this offering was an abomination to the Lord, (Isaiah 61:8) :

thus ye brought an offering;

such an one as it was: or a “minchah”, a meat offering, along with these abominable ones: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord;

which, when offered to a civil governor, would not be acceptable, (Malachi 1:8) and when contrary to the express law of God.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 והפחתם אותו “et efflastis illam”, Montanus; “anheli isto estis”, Tigurine version; “exsufflare possetis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, “diffflatis”, Drusius; “sufflavistis illud”, Burkus.

F17 “Et contristastis illum”; so some in Vatablus.

Malachi 1:14**But cursed be the deceiver**

A cunning, crafty, subtle man, who thinks and contrives, speaks and acts, in a very artful and deceiving manner; though some derive the word from (lky) , “to be able”; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “who is able”; to bring a proper offering, a perfect lamb, as it follows:

which hath in his flock a male;

without spot and blemish, as the law requires:

and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing;

that was a female, or had blemishes in it; for the law required what was perfect and without a blemish for a vow; what was superfluous or deficient in its parts might do for a freewill offering, but not for a vow, (Leviticus 22:18-20 Leviticus 22:23) wherefore such a man must be accursed, and such conduct must be highly resented by the Lord; had he it not in his power to do better, it might be excusable; but then it would be better not to have vowed at all; but to vow a sacrifice to the Lord, and deal deceitfully with him, when he could have brought an offering agreeable to his vow, and to the law, this is aggravated wickedness:

for I [am] a great King, saith the Lord of hosts;

the King of the whole world, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and therefore to be honoured and revered suitable to his dignity and greatness:

and my name [is] dreadful among the heathen;

because of his judgments executed among them; or rather because of his Gospel preached unto them; for this may be considered as a prophecy of what would be when the Gospel should be spread in the Gentile world; and therefore if they, when he was made known to them, would fear and reverence him; then the Israelites, to whom he had given such instances and proofs of his love, ought to have shown a greater regard unto him.

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 2

This chapter contains a reproof both of priests and people for their sins. It begins with the priests, Mal 2:1 and threatens, in case they attend not to glorify the name of the Lord, they and their blessings should be cursed, their seed corrupted, dung spread upon them, and they took away with it, Mal 2:2,3 and the end of this commandment being sent them, of giving glory to the name of God, was that the covenant might appear to be with Levi, or him that was typified by him, Mal 2:4 of which covenant some account is given, with the reason why the blessings of it were given to him, with whom it was, Mal 2:5 who is described by the true doctrine he preached; by the purity of his lips; by the peaceableness and righteousness of his walk and conversation; and by his usefulness and success in turning many from sin, Mal 2:6 and it being part of the priest's office to preserve true knowledge, and communicate it, it is the duty of the people to seek to him

for it; since he is the messenger of the Lord, Mal 2:7 but as for the priests of those times the prophet respects, they were apostates from the way of the Lord; made others to stumble at the law, and corrupted the covenant; and therefore became contemptible, base, and mean, in the sight of the people, Mal 2:8,9 who are next reprov'd for their marrying with those of other nations, idolatrous persons; and using polygamy and divorces, which were a profanation of the covenant of their fathers; a piece of perfidy and treachery among themselves; an abomination to the Lord; a profanation of his holiness; and led to idolatry, Mal 2:10,11 wherefore they are threatened to be cut off from the tabernacles of Jacob, and their sacrifices to be rejected; insomuch that the altar is represented as covered with weeping and tears, because disregarded, Mal 2:12,13. The reason of which was, because marrying more wives than one, and these strange women, was dealing treacherously with their lawful wives; was contrary to the first creation of man, and the end of it; and therefore such practices ought to be avoided; and the rather, since putting away was hateful to the Lord, Mal 2:14-16 and the chapter is concluded with a charge against them, that they wearied the Lord with their wicked words; affirming that the Lord took delight in the men that did evil; and that there were no judgment, truth, nor righteousness, in him, Mal 2:17.

Malachi 2:1

And now, O ye priests

That despised and profaned the name of the Lord; that suffered such corrupt and illegal sacrifices to be brought and offered up:

this commandment [is] for you:

of giving glory to the name of God; of taking care of his worship; of teaching the people knowledge, and directing them in the way in which they should walk; as follows:

Malachi 2:2

If ye will not hear

The commandment enjoined them; or the Gospel preached to them by Christ, and his apostles:

and if ye will not lay [it] to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts;

which they had despised and profaned before; if they did not take care of his worship and service, and honour the Messiah sent unto them, in whom

the name of the Lord was:

I will even send a curse upon you;

both upon priests and people; those that bring the bad offerings, and those that receive them, as Kimchi; though Abarbinel restrains it to the priests:

and I will curse your blessings,

either with which the priests blessed the people; or with which both they and the people were blessed; namely, their temporal blessings, such as their corn, and wine, and oil: and what wicked men have of this world, they have it with a curse, and not a blessing, as the righteous have; and therefore a little which they have, is better than much enjoyed by the wicked, (Psalms 37:16) :

yea, I have cursed them already;

that is, from the time they began to despise his name, and not give him the glory due unto him, as Kimchi and Abarbinel explain it:

because ye do not lay [it] to heart;

to glorify God.

Malachi 2:3

Behold, I will corrupt your seed

Or, “the seed for you” F18; that is, for your sake, as Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it; meaning the seed they cast into the earth, which the Lord threatens to corrupt and destroy; so that it should not spring up again, and bring forth any increase: or, “rebuke” F19 it, as the word sometimes signifies; and so the Targum,

“behold, I will rebuke you in the increase, the fruit (son) of the seed.”

The sense is the same; corrupting the seed being a rebuke to them; and rebuking the seed being a corruption of that, or hindering it from growing up. It is a threatening of a sore famine that should be in the Jewish nation; and which Cocceius thinks was that which happened in the days of Claudius Caesar, (Acts 11:28 Acts 11:29) . The Septuagint version renders it, “behold, I separate to you the shoulder”; the Arabic version, “the right hand”, or arm; and the Vulgate Latin is, “behold, I will cast forth to you the arm”; the right shoulder of the sacrifice, which was given to the priests, and here threatened to be cast to them with indignation, (Leviticus 7:32 Leviticus 7:34) (Deuteronomy 18:3) but the former sense is best:
and spread dung upon your faces, [even] the dung of your solemn

feasts;

that is, the dung of their beasts which were slain for sacrifice at their solemn feasts: so this word (זר) is used for a beast offered for sacrifice at a festival, (Psalms 118:27) . The sense is, that their sacrifices and solemn feasts were so far from being acceptable to God, that he would reject both them and their persons, and would cast the very dung of the creatures brought for sacrifice into their faces, and spread it over them: a phrase expressive of the utmost contempt of them, and of exposing them to the greatest shame and confusion for their sins. So the Targum,

`` I will make manifest the shame of your sins upon your faces; and will cause to cease the magnificence of your feasts.”

The Septuagint render it, the ventricle, or “maw”; which was given to the priests, (Deuteronomy 18:3) and in which the dung was contained: **and [one] shall take you away with it;**

with the dung spread upon them; they looking like a heap of dung, being covered with it, and had in no more account than that: or “to it” F20; that is, as Jarchi explains it, to the dung of the beasts of your sacrifices they shall carry you; or you shall be carried to it, that ye may be rejected and despised as that. Kimchi’s note is

`` the iniquity (you are guilty of) shall carry you to this contempt; measure for measure; you have despised me, and ye shall be despised:”

or “with him”, or “to himself” F21; meaning he, or it that shall take them away; either the wind or dung; or the enemy, as Aben Ezra interprets it; by whom the Romans may be designed, who took them away out of their own land, and carried them captive. According to the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, this is to be understood of God, who render the words, “I will take you together”, or “with it”.

FOOTNOTES:

F18 (Mkl) “propter vos”, Munster, Drusius.

F19 (reg) “increpabo”, Tigurine version; “increpo”, Drusius, Cocceius; “increpans”, Burkius.

F20 (wyla) , (eiv to auto) , Sept.; “ad istud”, so some in Vatablus, De Dieu.

F21 “Ad se”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version: Junius &

Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Calvin, Burkius.

Malachi 2:4

And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you (See Gill on Malachi 2:1):

that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts;

not that the ceremonial law might be confirmed and established, on which the Levitical priesthood was founded; for it was the will of God that that should be abolished, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it; but that the covenant of grace made with Christ, the antitype of Levi, with whom the true Urim and Thummim are, (Deuteronomy 33:8) , who has a more excellent ministry and priesthood than his, might take place, be made manifest, and be exhibited under the Gospel dispensation; of which, and of the person with whom it is, an account is given in the following verses.

Malachi 2:5

My covenant was with him of life and peace

Not with Aaron, nor with Phinehas; nor is it to be understood of a covenant, promising temporal life and outward prosperity to either of them; Aaron living a hundred and twenty three years, (Numbers 33:39) and Phinehas, according to some Jewish writers, above three hundred years, which they gather from (Judges 20:28) but of the covenant made with Christ from everlasting, called “a covenant of life”, because it was made with Christ the Word of life, who was with the Father from all eternity, and in time was made manifest in the flesh; and was made in behalf of persons ordained to eternal life, and in which that was promised and given to them in him; and in which it was agreed that he should become man, and lay down his life as such, that they might enjoy it: and it is called a “covenant of peace”, because the scheme of peace and reconciliation was drawn in it, and agreed unto; Christ was appointed in it to be the Peacemaker; and in consequence of which he was sent to procure peace, and he has made it by the blood of his cross: and this covenant may be said to have been and to be “with him”; because it was made with him from all eternity, as the head and representative of his people, and he had all the blessings and promises of it put into his hands; and it stands fast with him, and will do so for evermore.

And I gave them to him;

namely, the blessings of life and peace; eternal life is the gift of God;

and not only the promise of it, but that itself, was given to Christ in covenant for his people, and a power to give it to as many as the Father gave to him, (Psalms 21:4) (2 Timothy 1:1) (1 John 5:12) (John 17:2) he gave him also peace to make, put this work of peacemaking into his hand; and he allows it to be made by him, and that it is rightly effected; and from his blood and righteousness peace springs to his people; and they enjoy peace in him and through him, yea, all prosperity and happiness:

[for] the fear wherewith he feared me;

because of his obedience to the precept and penalty of the law; because of his righteousness, and sufferings, and death, by means of which life and peace came to his people, and in which he showed great fear and reverence of God, (Hebrews 5:7) the word “for” is not in the original text, and may be left out in a version, or supplied with “and”; and the sense be, besides the blessings of life and peace, I also gave him the fear with which he feared me; which must be understood of the grace of fear bestowed on him as man: so the Septuagint version, “I gave unto him in fear to fear me”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “and I gave him fear, and he feared me”: and the Arabic version, “I gave him fear, that he might fear me”: the Targum is,

“I gave him the perfect doctrine of the law, or the doctrine of the perfect law (see (James 1:25)) that he might fear before me.”

And was afraid before my name;

frightened, and put into consternation, as he was when in the garden, and he began to be heavy and sore amazed, (Mark 14:33) or he was broken and bruised, as Kimchi interprets the word here used, because of the name of the Lord, to satisfy his justice, fulfil his law, and glorify all his perfections.

Malachi 2:6

The law of truth was in his mouth

The Gospel, the word and doctrine of truth; which comes from the God of truth; is concerning Christ the truth and men are guided into it by the Spirit of truth; it contains most glorious truths, and nothing but truth: and this was in the mouth of Christ, being put there by his Father, who gave him what he should say, and what he should speak; and which was preached by him in the most faithful manner, and so as it never was by any other, for which he was abundantly qualified:

and iniquity was not found in his lips;

there was none in his nature; nor in his heart; nor in his life; nor in his lips; none could be found there by men nor devils: there was no falsehood in his doctrines; no deceit in his promises; no dissimulation in his expressions of love to men; nothing vain, light, frothy, and unprofitable, dropped from him in common conversation; no reviling in return to his enemies; nor any impatient expressions or murmurings at the time of his sufferings and death, (1 Peter 2:22 1 Peter 2:23) : he walked with me in peace and equity:

he walked with God, he had communion with him; though he was sometimes left alone, he was not alone, God was with him; he was conformable to his will, and walked according to it, in obedience to his law, moral and ceremonial, and in the discharge of all religious duties: he walked with God “in peace”, without quarrelling with any of his dispensations towards him; he did nothing to break the peace that subsisted between them, but always did the things which pleased his father, and had peace in what he did; and he walked with him in “equity”, or righteousness, fulfilling his righteous law, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness:

and did turn many away from iniquity;

doctrinal and practical; which is to be understood, not of a bare reformation only in principle and practice, but of true real conversion; of which there were many instances under the ministry of his forerunner John the Baptist, and under his own ministry when in person on earth; and under the ministry of his apostles, attended with his Spirit and power, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world.

Malachi 2:7

For the priest's lips should keep knowledge

Or “shall keep knowledge”, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; or “do keep knowledge”, as the Arabic version; and so the Syriac version, “for the lips of the priest drop knowledge”; all this is true of Christ our great High Priest; for as it was predicted of him, that his lips should keep knowledge, so they have kept it, and do keep it; not concealing it, but preserving it, and communicating it freely and openly; as he did to his disciples and followers when here on earth, and by them to others; and still does by his Spirit, giving to men the knowledge of themselves and state; the knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation by him, and of the truths of the Gospel:

and they should seek the law at his mouth;

not the law of Moses, but the doctrine of grace, and any wholesome instruction and advice; which he is greatly qualified to give, being the

wonderful Counsellor: it may be rendered, “they shall seek”, or “do seek”; and which has been fulfilled, especially in the Gentiles, and in the isles that waited for his law or doctrine, (Isaiah 11:10) (42:4) :

for he [is] the messenger of the Lord of hosts;

or “angel” F23; he is the Angel of God’s presence, and of the covenant, (Isaiah 63:9) (Malachi 3:1) which name he has from being sent, for he came not of himself, but his Father sent him; he was sent as a priest to atone for the sins of his people, and to be their Saviour; and as a prophet, to instruct and teach them; and therefore they should seek to him for knowledge, and attend his word and ordinances, and implore his spirit and grace.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 (Kalm) (aggelov) , Sept; “angelus”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Burkus.

Malachi 2:8

But ye are departed out of the way

Of truth and righteousness, of life and peace, of eternal salvation and happiness, pointed to by Christ and his forerunner, and by his apostles and ministers that followed him, and which was clearly showed in the preaching of the Gospel: this was the character of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, in Christ’s time, to which the prophet seems to have respect; who not only failed in their observance of legal sacrifices, complained of in the former chapter (Malachi 1:1-14) , but left that way of atonement and salvation they directed to, and led others out of the way with them:

ye have caused many to stumble at the law;

at the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which was the stumbling stone they fell at, seeking for righteousness, and directing others to seek for it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, (Romans 9:32 Romans 9:33) :

ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts:

that which was foreshadowed by the Levitical priesthood and covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, dispensed under the Gospel dispensation by the ministry of the word and ordinances; which they rejected, despised, and set at nought, and as much as in them lay endeavoured to make void, by not attending to these things, nor suffering others, but doing all they could to bring them into disuse, contempt, and disgrace.

Malachi 2:9**Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base**

When their city and temple were destroyed by the Romans, and they were carried captive by them, and became a taunt and a proverb in all places where they came:

before all the people;

the nations of the world, among whom they were scattered:

according as ye have not kept my ways;

neither those which the law directed to, either moral or ceremonial; nor what the Gospel directed to, the ordinances and institutions of Christ, particularly baptism, which the Jews rejected against themselves, (Luke 7:30) : but have been partial in the law;

in the observance of it, attending to the lesser, and taking no notice of the weightier matters of it, as the Jews are charged by Christ, (Matthew 23:23) and in the interpretation of it, restraining its sense only to outward actions, for which they are reprov'd, (Matthew 5:1-48) or “received faces”, or “accepted persons in the law” F24; in matters of the law they were concerned in, they had respect to the persons of men, by giving the sense of it, and pronouncing judgment, in favour of some, to the prejudice of others, wrongly.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 (וּנְשָׂאִים פְּנִים בַּחֹרֶה) “et accepistis faciem in lege”, Pagninus; “assumentes facies”, Montanus; “suscipitis faciem”, Piscator; “accipitis faciem”, Cocceius; “et ferentes faciem in lege”, Burkus.

Malachi 2:10**Have we not all one father?**

&c.] Whether this is understood of Adam the first man, of whose blood all nations of the earth are made, and who in the same sense is the father of all living, as Eve was the mother of all living; or of Abraham the father of the Jewish people, of whom, as their father, they used to glory; or of Jacob, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, whom the Jews used to call our father Jacob; or of God, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of the Jews by national adoption of them; and who may the rather be thought to be meant, since it follows,

hath not one God created us?

either as men, or formed us as a body politic; which may serve to explain what is meant by their having one father: whichever is the sense of these words, the argument from hence is strong; that there ought to be no partiality used in the law, or any respect had to persons, in that the rich and the poor have all one Father and one Creator; see (James 2:1-8) :

why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother;

by perverting justice, having respect to persons, favouring one to the prejudice of another, as it follows:

by profaning the covenant of your fathers?

the covenant made with them at Sinai, as Jarchi explains it; the law that was then enjoined them, particularly such as forbid respect of persons, (Leviticus 19:15) (Deuteronomy 16:19) some think, as Aben Ezra, that a new section here begins, and that the prophet proceeds to a new reproof, and for another sin these people were guilty of, in marrying wives of another nation, contrary to the law in (Exodus 34:15) which was dealing treacherously with one another, and profaning the covenant of their fathers.

Malachi 2:11**Judah hath dealt treacherously**

Not only every man against his brother, by being partial in the law; or against the women of their nation, by marrying others; or against their wives, by putting them away; but against Christ the Son of God by betraying and delivering him up into the hands of the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified:

and an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem;

which was the taking of the true Messiah with wicked hands, condemning him and putting him to death, even the shameful and accursed death of the cross; which was done in the land of Israel, and in and near the city of Jerusalem:

for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved;

Christ, who is the Lord's Holy One, holiness itself, the most holy, and holiness to the Lord for his people; and who is his dear Son, the Son of his love, whom he loved from everlasting, continued to love in time amidst all his meanness, sorrows, and sufferings, and will love for evermore; him the Jews profaned by blaspheming him, falsely accusing him, and condemning him; by spitting upon him, buffeting, scourging, and crucifying him: some interpret this "holiness" of the soul of Judah, which was holy before the Lord, and loved, as the Targum; so Jarchi of Judah himself, or Israel, who

was holiness to the Lord; and others of the holy place, the sanctuary, and all holy things belonging thereto; and others of the holy state of marriage, since it follows:

and hath married the daughter of a strange god;

which the Targum paraphrases thus,

“and they were pleased to take to them wives, the daughters of the people;”

the Gentiles, such as Moabites, Ammonites, and the like: and this sense is followed by most interpreters, though the phrase seems rather to be expressive of idolatry; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions interpret it of their being intent upon, and serving, strange gods; and as the Jews rejected the Son of God, and his word, ordinances, and worship, they had not the true God, nor did they worship him, but became guilty of idolatry; and besides, as they rejected the King Messiah from being their King, so they declared they had no king but Caesar, an idolatrous emperor, and joined with the idolatrous Gentiles in putting Christ to death, (John 19:12 John 19:15) (Acts 4:27) .

Malachi 2:12

The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this

That is guilty of such treachery, wickedness, and idolatry: or “to the man that doeth this” F25; all that belong to him, his children and substance: it denotes the utter destruction, not of a single man and his family only, but of the whole Jewish nation and its polity, civil and ecclesiastical, as follows: the master and the scholar out of the tabernacles of Jacob;

the Targum paraphrases it,

“the son, and son’s son, out of the cities of Jacob;”

agreeable to which is Kimchi’s note,

“it is as if it was said, there shall not be left in his house one alive; that there shall not be in his house one that answers him, that calls by name.”

In the Hebrew text it is, “him that is awake, and him that answers” {z}; which the Talmudists F1 explain, the former of the wise men or masters,

and the latter of the disciples of the wise men; to which sense our version agrees: but by “him that waketh or watcheth”, according to Cocceius, is meant the civil magistrate, who watches for the good of the commonwealth, and so may design the elders and rulers of the people; and by him that “answereth”, the prophet, who returns answers when he is consulted in things belonging to the law of God, and such were the scribes and lawyers.

And him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts;

the priests, that offered sacrifice for the people; so that hereby is threatened an entire destruction, both of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, that there should be no prince, prophet, and priest among them; all should be removed out of the tents of Jacob, or cities of Israel; see (Hosea 3:4) .

FOOTNOTES:

F25 (וִירָא) “viro”, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius, De Dieu; “filius et qui fecerit istud”, Piscator.

F26 (hnew re) “vigilantem et respondentem”, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Grotius; “vigilantem et responsantem”, Junius & Tremellius; “vigilem et respondentem”, Burkius.

F1 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 82. 1.

Malachi 2:13

And this have ye done again

Or “in the second” F2 place; to their rejection and ill treatment of Christ they added their hypocritical prayers and tears, as follows:

covering the altar of the Lord with tears and weeping, and with crying out;

for the Messiah they vainly expect, pretending great humiliation for their sins: though some, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra, make the first evil to be their offering illegal sacrifices on the altar, complained of in the former chapter (Malachi 1:1-14) ; and this second, their marrying strange wives, on account of which their lawful wives came into the house of God, and wept over the altar before the Lord, complaining of the injury that was done them:

insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand;

which expresses an utter rejection and abrogation of legal sacrifices; and which some make to be the reason of their covering the altar with tears and weeping: or the altar is represented as weeping, because sacrifice is no more

offered upon it; see (Daniel 9:27) (Hosea 3:4) .

FOOTNOTES:

F2 (שנית) “secundo”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius, Burkius.

Malachi 2:14

Yet ye say, Wherefore?

&c.] What is the meaning of the women covering the altar with tears? as if they knew not what was the reason of it, when they were so notoriously guilty of breach of covenant with them; which is an instance of their impudence, as Abarbinel observes: or, “if ye say, wherefore?” as the Targum and Kimchi interpret the words; should you say, what is the reason why the Lord will not regard nor receive our offerings? the answer is ready,

Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth:

when espoused together in their youthful days, the Lord was present at that solemn contract, and saw the obligations they were laid under to each other, and he was called upon by both parties to be a witness of the same; and at the present time he was a witness how agreeably the wives of the Israelites had behaved towards their husbands, and how treacherously they had acted towards them; he saw and knew, that, whatever pretensions they made, they did not love them, nor behave as they should towards them; and therefore had just cause of complaint against them, and must be a witness for the one, and against the other: this sin of hating and divorcing their wives, or of marrying others besides them, which prevailed much in our Lord’s time, is particularly mentioned, though they were guilty of many other sins, as a reason of the Lord’s not accepting their offerings: the aggravations of it are, that they had broken a contract God was witness to, and dealt injuriously with wives they had espoused in the days of their youth; see (Proverbs 2:17) (5:18) :

against whom thou hast dealt treacherously;

by divorce or polygamy: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “whom thou hast despised”: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “whom thou hast left”; divorced and took others, which arose from hatred and contempt of their former: other aggravations follow:

yet [is] she thy companion;

or, “and she is”, or “though she is thy companion” F3: has been so in time past, and ought to be so still, and so accounted: the wife is a part of a man’s self, is one flesh with him; a partaker of what he has; a partner with

him in prosperity and adversity; a companion in life, civil and religious, and ought to remain so till death part them; for, whom God has put together, let no man put asunder:

and the wife of thy covenant;

wherefore either to divorce her, or marry another, was a breach of covenant; for by “covenant” is not meant the covenant of God made with the people of Israel, in which they both were; but the covenant of marriage made between them, and which was broken by such practices.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 (וְהִיא חֵבְרָתְךָ) “et ipsa est socia tua”, Montanus, Drusius, Burkius; “quum sit socia tua”, Pagninus, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Malachi 2:15

And did not he make one?

&c.] That is, did not God make one man, and out of his rib one woman? did he not make man, male and female? did he not make one pair, one couple, only Adam and Eve, whom he joined together in marriage? or rather, did he not make one woman only, and brought her to Adam to be his wife? which shows that his intention and will were, that one man should have but one wife at a time; the contrary to which was the then present practice of the Jews:

Yet had he the residue of the spirit;

it was not for want of power that he made but one woman of Adam’s rib, and breathed into her the breath of life, or infused into her a human soul or spirit; he could have made many women at the same time; and as the Father of spirits, having the residue of them with him, or a power left to make as many as he pleased, he could have imparted spirits unto them, and given Adam more wives than one: And wherefore one?

what is the reason why he made but one woman, when he could have made ten thousand, or as many as he pleased? the answer is, That he might seek a godly seed;

or “a seed of God” F4; a noble excellent seed; a legitimate offspring, born in true and lawful wedlock; see (1 Corinthians 7:14) a seed suitable to the dignity of human nature, made after the image of God, and not like that of brute beasts, promiscuous and uncertain:

Therefore take heed to your spirit;

to your affections, that they do not go after other women, and be led

thereby to take them in marriage, and to despise and divorce the lawful wife, as it follows:

and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth;

by marrying another, or divorcing her: these words are differently rendered and interpreted by some; but the sense given seems to be the true one, and most agreeable to the scope of the place. Some render the first clause, “hath not one made?” F5 that is, did not the one God, who is the only living and true God, make one man or one woman? and then the sense is the same as before; or did not that one God make, constitute, and appoint, that the woman should be the man’s companion, and the wife of his covenant, as in the latter part of the preceding verse (Malachi 2:13) ? or, “did not one do?” F6 that is, so as we have done, take another wife besides the wife of his youth? and so they are the words of the people to the prophets, justifying their practice by example; by the example of Abraham, whom some of the Jewish writers think is intended by the “one”, as in (Isaiah 51:2) (Ezekiel 33:24) . The Targum is,

“was not one Abraham alone, from whom the world was created?”

or propagated. Kimchi gives it as his own sense, in these words;

“Abraham, who was one, and the father of all that follow him in his faith, did not do as ye have done; for he did not follow his lust, nor even marry Sarah, but so that he might cause the seed of God to remain;”

yet he mentions it as his father’s sense, that they are the words of the people to the prophet, expressed in a way of interrogation, saying, did not our father Abraham, who was one, do as we have done? who left his wife, and married Hagar his maid, though he had the residue or excellency of the spirit, and was a prophet; to whom the prophet replies, and what did that one seek? a godly seed; which is, as if it was said, when he married Hagar, it was to seek a seed, because he had no seed of Sarah his wife. A seed was promised him, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; he sought not to gratify his lust, but to obtain this seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made, as the apostle argues, (Galatians 3:16) “he saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ”; called here the “godly seed”, or the “seed God” F7, as some choose to render the words; that is, that seed which is God, who is a divine

Person, God and man in one person; or which is of God, of his immediate production, without the help of a man; which the Jews call the seed that comes from another place, and which they use as a periphrasis of the Messiah. So on those words in (Genesis 4:25) , “she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed” ,

`` says R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel, she has respect to that seed which comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah F8.”

And the same Rabbi elsewhere F9 observes, on those words in (Genesis 19:32) , “that we may preserve seed of our father” ,

`` it is not written, that we may preserve a son of our father, but that we may preserve seed of our father; that seed which is he that comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah.”

Now as Abraham had the promise of a son, and his wife was barren, he took the method he did that he might have one, the son of the promise, a type of the Messiah, and from whom he should spring; and this is sufficient to justify him in it: besides, he did not deal treacherously with Sarah his wife, for it was with her good will and by her authority he did this thing; but do you take heed to your spirit, that no one of you deal treacherously with the wife of his youth, to leave her, and marry the daughter of a strange God: and much the same sense Jarchi takes notice of as the Agadah, or the interpretation of their ancient Rabbins. Some render the words, “and not one does this”; that is, deals treacherously with the wife of his youth, that has the residue of the spirit, or the least spark of the Spirit of God in him; and how should anyone do it, seeking a godly seed? therefore take heed to your spirit; so De Dieu. But according to others the sense is,

`` there is not one of you that does according to the law, whose spirit remains with him that is not mixed with the daughter of a strange god;”

which is Aben Ezra’s note. But according to Abarbanel the sense is, not one only has done this, committed this evil, in marrying more and strange women; not some only, and the rest have the spirit with them, and keep it pure from this sin; so that a godly seed cannot be procreated from you;

therefore take heed to your spirit.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 (זר אלהים) “semen Dei”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkus.

F5 (ולא אחד שיה) “nonue unus fecit?” V. L. Menochius, Tirinus.

F6 “Et ne unus fecit?” Pagninus, Montanus; “et unus ille (Abramus) ita egit?” Grotius; “annon unus hoc fecit?” Tigurine version; so Joseph Kimchi.

F7 (זר אלהים) “semen Deus”, Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. 1. 8. c. 2. p. 550.

F8 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4. Midrash Ruth, fol. 36. 1.

F9 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4.

Malachi 2:16

For the Lord the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away

The divorcing of wives; for though this was suffered because of the hardness of their hearts, it was not approved of by the Lord; nor was it from the beginning; and it was disagreeable, and even hateful to him, (Matthew 19:8) in the margin of some Bibles the words are rendered, “if he hate her, put her away”; and so the Targum,

“but if thou hatest her, put her away;”

to which agree the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Arabic versions; and this sense made mention of in both Talmuds, and is thought to be agreeable to the law in (Deuteronomy 24:3) though the law there speaks of a fact that might be, and not of what ought to be; wherefore the former sense is best; and this other seems to have been at first calculated to favour the practice of the Jews, who put away their wives through hatred to them. The Jews were very much inclined to divorce their wives upon very trivial occasions; if they did not dress their food well, were not of good behaviour, or not so modest as became the daughters of Israel; if they did not find favour with their husbands; and, especially, if they had entertained a hatred of them: so says R. Judah F11,

“if he hate her, let him put her away;”

but this is by some of them restrained to a second wife; for of the first they say,

“it is not proper to be hasty to put away a first wife; but a second, if he hates her, let him put her away F12”

and R. Eleazer says F13, whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears for him, referring to the words in (Malachi 2:13) and divorces of this kind they only reckon lawful among the Israelites, and found it upon this passage; for so they make God to speak after this manner F14,

“in Israel I have granted divorces; among the nations of the world I have not granted divorces. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phinehas, observes, that in every other section it is written, “the Lord of hosts”; but here it is written, “the God of Israel”, to teach thee that the holy blessed God does not put his name to divorces (or allow them) but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabba says, the Gentiles have no divorces.”

But some of them have better understanding of these words, and more truly give the sense of them thus, as R. Jochanan does, who interprets them,

“the putting away of the wife is hateful F15;”

it is so to God, and ought not to be done by men but in case of adultery, as our Lord has taught, (Matthew 5:32) (19:9) and which was the doctrine of the school of Shammai in Christ’s time, who taught,

“that no man should divorce his wife, unless he found in her filthiness;”

i.e. that she was guilty of adultery; though this Maimonides restrains to the first wife, as before: but the house of Hillell, who lived in the same time, was of a different mind, and taught that

“if she burnt his food;”

either over dressed or over salted it, according to (Deuteronomy 24:1) . R. Akiba says, if he found another more beautiful than her, according to (Deuteronomy 24:1) , he might divorce her F16; of the form of a divorce,

(See Gill on Matthew 5:31). Those interpreters among Christians that go this way do not look upon this as an approbation of divorce, on account of hatred; but that so to do is better than to retain them with hatred of them, seeing it was connived at, or than to take other wives with them.

For [one] covereth violence with his garment,

or “on his garment”,

saith the Lord of hosts;

as he that puts away his wife does her an open injury, which though he may cover, pretending the law, which connives at divorces; yet the violence done to his wife is as manifest as the garment upon his back: though those who think the former words are an instruction to put away wives, when hated, consider this as a reason why they should do so; because, by retaining them, and yet hating them, and taking other wives to them, is doing them a real injury, whatever cover or pretence may be used; because, if dismissed, they might be loved by, and married to, other men. Aben Ezra seems to have hit the sense of these words, when he makes this to be the object of God’s hatred, as well as the former; his note is,

“the Lord hateth him that putteth away his wife that is pure, and he hates him that covereth; or God sees his violence which is done in secret.”

Mr. Pocock proposes a conjecture, which is very ingenious and probable, that as the words will bear the construction Aben Ezra gives, that God hates putting away, and hates that one should put violence upon or over his garment; by “garment” he thinks may be meant a man’s lawful wife, which is as a garment to him; and by “violence” a second wife, or other wives, taken to the injury, hurt, and vexation of the former; and the covering, or superinducing violence over the garment, is marrying an unlawful wife, over or with, or above his lawful one: and the sense is, that as God hates divorce, so he hates polygamy:

therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously;

(See Gill on Malachi 2:15).

FOOTNOTES:

F11 T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 2.

F12 Maimon. Hilchot Gerushin, c. 10, 21, 22.

F13 T. Bab. Gittin, ib.

F14 T. Hieros. Kiddushin, c. 1. fol. 58. 3.

F15 T. Bab. Gittin, ut supra.

F16 Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10.

Malachi 2:17

Ye have wearied the Lord with your words

As well as with their actions; see (Isaiah 43:24) this is said after the manner of men, they saying those things which were displeasing and provoking to him, and which he could not bear to hear; or otherwise weariness properly cannot be attributed to God:

Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him?

as if they were clear and innocent; or, as the Targum, “if ye should say”; though they might not express themselves in words in such an impudent manner; yet should they say so in their hearts, or supposing they should utter such words with their lips, out of the abundance of their evil hearts, the answer is ready:

When ye say, Every one that doeth evil [is] good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them;

which they concluded from the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous; so murmuring at, and complaining of, the providence of God; he acting as if he delighted in wicked men, and as if they that did evil were the most grateful and acceptable to him: or,

if this was not the case,

Where [is] the God of judgment?

why does he not arise and show himself to be a God that judgeth the earth, by taking vengeance on the wicked, and granting prosperity to his people? De Dieu takes these last words to be the words of the prophet, and thinks that (א) is a particle of exclamation, and should be rendered “O”; and that the prophet expresses his wonder at the patience and longsuffering of God in bearing such impiety and blasphemy as before delivered. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, “where is the God of righteousness?” either God the Father, who is righteous in all his ways, and faithful in the fulfilment of all his promises; or, Christ the Lord our righteousness, who was to come, and is come into this world for judgment, as well as to bring in an everlasting righteousness. This may be considered as a scoff of wicked men at the long delay of the Messiah’s coming, when they expected outward prosperity and happiness; just as the scoffers in the last day will mock at the promise of his second coming, (2 Peter 3:3 2 Peter 3:4) and so the words, with which the next chapter begins (Malachi 3:1) , are an answer to these.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 3

In this chapter the prophet reproves and threatens both princes and prophets, first separately, and then conjunctly; first the heads and princes of the people, civil magistrates, for their ignorance of justice, and hatred of good, and love of evil, and for their oppression and cruelty; and they are threatened with distress when they should cry unto the Lord, and should not be heard by him, Mic 3:1-4; next the prophets are taken to task, for their voraciousness, avarice, and false prophesying; and are threatened with darkness, with want of vision, and of an answer from the Lord, and with shame and confusion, Mic 3:5-7; and the prophet being full of the Spirit and power of God, to declare the sins and transgressions of Jacob and Israel, Mic 3:8, very freely declaims against princes, priests, and prophets, all together; who, though guilty of very notorious crimes, yet were in great security, and promised themselves impunity, Mic 3:9-11; wherefore the city and temple of Jerusalem are threatened with an utter desolation, Mic 3:12.

Micah 3:1

And I said, hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel

This seems to be a new sermon or discourse, delivered at another time and to another people than the preceding for, as that chiefly concerns the ten tribes, this the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and was spoken to them in the times of Hezekiah, as appears from (Jeremiah 26:18) ; for though Jacob and Israel generally design the ten tribes, yet here the other two, as is manifest from the above cited place, and also from (Micah 3:9 Micah 3:10 Micah 3:12) ; and not only heads of families, but such as were the highest posts under the government, the sanhedrim of the nation, judges, rulers, and nobles, are here addressed; and who had a great share in national guilt, being ringleaders in sin, who ought to have set good examples to others; and these are not to be spared because of their grandeur and dignity, but to faithfully reprove for their vices, and which they should diligently attend unto; though they are to be addressed in a respectful and honourable manner, and be entreated to hearken to the word of the Lord by his prophet; all which was carefully observed by Micah; and it was with pleasure he could reflect upon his plain, faithful, and affectionate reproof of those great men:

[is it] not for you to know judgment?

what is just and right to be done by men, and what sentence is to be passed in courts of judicature, in cases brought before them and not only to know, in a speculative way, what is equitable, but to practise it themselves, and see that it is done by others; and when they duly considered this, they would be able to see and own that what the prophet from the Lord would now charge them with, or denounce upon them, was according to truth and justice.

Micah 3:2

Who hate the good, and love the evil

Instead of knowing and doing what was just and right; or, directly contrary to their light and knowledge, and the duty of their office, they hated that which is good, which is agreeable to the law, nature, and will of God, and loved that which is evil, which is contrary thereunto; or they hated to do good, and loved to do evil, as the Targum; as men do who are averse to good, and prone to evil; or they hated a good man, as Aben Ezra, and loved the evil man; not only delighted in committing sin themselves, but took pleasure in those that did it; and could not endure the company and conversation of holy and good men:

who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones:

like wild beasts that tear off skin and flesh from the bones, and then devour them; or like cruel shepherds, that, not content to fleece their flocks, skin them, and take their flesh also, and feed themselves, and not the flock; or like butchers, that first take off the skin off a beast, and then cut up its flesh. The design of the expressions is to show what rigour, cruelty, and oppressions, these rulers exercised on the people and by their heavy taxes and levies, and exorbitant penalties and fines, pillaged and plundered them of all they had in the world, and left them quite bare, as bones stripped of their skin and flesh. So the Targum,

“seizing on their substance by violence, and their precious mammon they take away.”

Micah 3:3

Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skins from off them

Like cannibals, flay them alive, and then eat their flesh: this signifies, as before, devouring their substance, only expressed in terms which still more

set forth their savageness, inhumanity, barbarity, and cruelty. So the Targum,

“who spoil the substance of my people, and their precious mammon they take from them;”

and what aggravated their guilt was, that they were the Lord’s people by profession and religion they so used; whom he had committed to their care to rule over, protect, and defend:

and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron:

did with them as cooks do, who not only cut flesh off the bones, and into slices, but break the bones themselves, to get out the marrow, and chop them small, that they may have all the virtue that is in them, to make their soup and broth the richer; by which is signified, that these wicked and avaricious rulers took every method to squeeze the people, and get all their wealth and riches into their hands, that they might have in a more riotous and luxurious manner.

Micah 3:4

Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them,

&c.] When all the above evils threatened them in the preceding chapters shall come upon them; when the enemy shall invade their land, besiege their cities, and take them, and they, their families and substance, just ready to fall into their hands, they shall cry unto the Lord; or pray unto him, as the Targum, in the time of their distress; but he will not hear their prayer, so as to answer it according to their desire; that is, he will not save them from imminent danger, but deliver them up, them, and all that belong unto them, into the hands of such that shall use them as they have done others: he will even hide his face from them at that time;

turn his back upon them, and a deaf ear to them, and show them no favour, nor grant them any help and protection:

as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings;

he will punish them according to the law of retaliation; as when the poor cried unto them, when they were stripping them of their substance, and they would not hearken to them, so now, when they cry unto the Lord in their distress, he will not hearken to them; and as they turned their backs, and hid their faces from those that were afflicted by them, and would show them no favour, so will the Lord deal with them; and as they exercised the utmost cruelty and barbarity that could be done, they will now be given up

into the hands of cruel and merciless men, that will use them in like manner: or, “because they have done ill in their doings” F2 to the poor, whose cause God will defend and vindicate.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 (כֹּאשֵׁר) (αὐψ ὠν) “eo quod”, Sept. “quia”, Drusius; “pro eo quod”, Grotius.

Micah 3:5

Thus saith the Lord, concerning the prophets that make my people err

The false prophets, as the Targum; and as the description given of them shows; who, instead of directing the people in the right way, as by their office and characters as prophets they should have done, they led them into mistakes about matters of religion and civil government, and out of the way of their duty to God and men, and exposed them to great danger and distress; and this was the more aggravating, as they were the Lord’s people by name and profession, whom they caused to err from his ways and worship, which brought his displeasure upon them: that bite with their teeth, and cry, peace;

prophesy smooth things, promise all kind of prosperity and plenty, and bite their lips, and keep in those distresses and calamities which they could not but see coming upon the people; or, while they are prophesying good things, they gnash their teeth against the prophets of the Lord, and bitterly inveigh against them for threatening with war, destruction, and captivity; or, by flattering the people with their lips, they bite them, devour their substance, and are the cause of their hurt and ruin; or rather, so long as the people fed them well, and they had a sufficiency to bite and live upon, they foretold happy days unto them, So the Targum,

‘‘he that feeds them with a feast of flesh, they prophesy peace to him;’’

which sense is confirmed by what follows,
and he that putteth not into their mouth, they even declare war against him;

who do not give them what they ask, or do not feed them according to their desire, do not keep a good table for them, and cram and pamper them,

but neglect them, and do not provide well for them; these they threaten with one calamity or another that shall befall them; and endeavour to set their neighbours against them, and even the government itself, and do them all the mischief they can by defamation and slander.

Micah 3:6

Therefore night [shall be] unto you, that ye shall not have a vision

Not that those outward gifts and illuminations, and that prophetic light they had, or seemed to have should be taken away from them, and it should be quite a night with them; because these men were never sent of God, or received any message from him, or had any prophetic talents at all, and therefore could not be taken away from them, and they be benighted in this sense; though, it is true, such might be the circumstances they would be brought into, that it should appear to the people that they are the dark persons they were, that they have no vision, nor never had any; but rather the sense is, that such dark providences and dreadful calamities should come upon the people in general, and upon those prophets in particular, often signified by “night” in Scripture, that they would not have the face to pretend any more that they had any vision from God of good times and things. It may be rendered, “therefore night [shall be] unto you because of vision” F3; calamity should come upon them because of their false and pretended visions of peace and prosperity they deluded the people with: **and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine;**

such darkness of affliction should be upon them, that they would not offer to deliver out any divination or prediction of good things coming upon them; or such darkness and distress would be their portion “because of divination” F4, on account of their lying divinations they had imposed upon the people:

and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them;

their time of prosperity will be over, and they shall be no more in favour with the people, or courted and feasted by them; but shall be had in the utmost contempt and abhorrence. The Targum of the whole is,

“therefore ye shall blush at prophesying, and be ashamed of teaching; and tribulation as darkness shall cover the false prophets, and the time shall be darkened upon them.”

FOOTNOTES:

F3 (מחזרת) “propter visionem”, Munster, Piscator.

F4 (מקרוב) “propter divinationem”, Munster; “propter divinare, i. e. divinationem”, Vatablus; “prae visione---prae divinatione”, Burkius.

Micah 3:7

Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded,

&c.] When the events of things will make it most clearly appear to all that their visions, divinations, and prophecies, are false; they will not be able to lift up their heads, or show their faces, but shame and confusion will cover them:

yea, they shall all cover their lips;

stop their mouths, hold their tongues, and be entirely and totally silenced; they will not pretend to utter any other vision or prophecy; nor be able to say one word in defence of themselves, and of what they have before prophesied; every thing in providence being contrary to what they had said, and agreeable to the words of the true prophets; or they shall cover their lips as mourners; as the Targum adds, by way of explanation; see (Ezekiel 24:17 Ezekiel 24:22) . It is said F5 there were two gates in Solomon’s temple; one called the gate of the bridegrooms, the other the gate of mourners; to those that entered the latter, if their lip was covered, it was said, he that dwells in this house comfort thee; and so the lips of the false prophets being covered may signify that they were now sorry for what they had done, at least because of the calamities on them and the people; though the former sense seems best:

for [there is] no answer of God;

not that they shall be ashamed and silenced because they shall now have no answer of God, for they never had any, which this would imply; but that it shall now be most plain and clear to all that the Lord never spoke by them, and they never had any answer from him; all their visions, divinations, and prophecies, were of, themselves, and not of him; what they delivered was not the word of the Lord, but their own; and this now being discovered and manifest to everyone, wilt put them to utter silence and shame. The Targum is,

“for there is not in them a spirit of prophecy from the Lord.”

FOOTNOTES:

F5 R. Jacob, Sepher Musar, c. 9. apud Drusii Proverb. class. 2. l. 21. sect. 194.

Micah 3:8

But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord

Or, “full of power, even, the Spirit of the Lord”, as Gussetius F6, by way of contrast, and as explaining what is meant by power; for so the Spirit is sometimes called from his gifts and graces, which are powerful in men; see (Luke 24:47) (Acts 1:8) (Acts 6:5 Acts 6:8) . These are the words of Micah concerning himself, in opposition to the false prophets, who are destitute of the Spirit of God; men of mean sordid dispositions, that had nothing but sinister and selfish ends in view, and not in the least qualified for the office and character they bore; whereas he could say of himself, with truth, that he was possessed of sufficient abilities for such an employment; and which he had, not of himself, but from the Spirit of God, who gives gifts to men, and divides them to each as he will; so that this was no vaunt and vain boast, or a piece of arrogance and ostentation in the prophet; since he only opposes himself to the false prophets, and ascribes his endowments and qualifications, not to himself, but to the Spirit of God; he had, though they had not, answers from the Lord, visions and prophecies from him, with a commission and abilities from him to execute the office of a prophet, being under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and full of him and his gifts:

and of judgment, and of might;

or of the judgment of truth, as the Targum; being able to discern truth and error, between what comes from the Spirit of God, and what from a lying spirit, or a spirit of divination and falsehood; what is proper to, be spoken, when the right time, and to whom; and having courage and greatness of mind, fearing no man’s person or face, but bold

to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin;

freely and openly to set it before them in a true light, with all aggravating circumstances, and reprove them for the same; and threaten them with the judgments of God in case they, repented not; see (Isaiah 58:1) ; and as a proof of all this, says what follows:

FOOTNOTES:

F6 Ebr. Comment. p. 468.

Micah 3:9**Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel**

As an instance of his boldness, courage, and impartiality, he begins with the principal men of the land, and charges them with sins, and reproves for them, and denounces judgments on account of them; (See Gill on Micah 3:1);

that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity;

a sad character of princes, rulers, and judges, who not only ought to know but to love judgment, justice, and equity, and do them; even take delight and pleasure in the distribution of them to everyone, and in every cause that came before them; but, instead of this, hated to do that which was right and just; and perverted all the rules and laws of justice and equity, clearing the guilty, and condemning the innocent.

Micah 3:10

They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

] Or, “O thou that buildest up” F7 or “everyone of them that buildeth up” F8 for the word is in the singular number; but, be fire words rendered either of these ways, they respect the heads and princes of the people; who either repaired the temple on Zion, or ornamented the king’s palace, or built themselves fine stately houses in Jerusalem, or large streets there, by money they took of murderers to save them, as Kimchi; or by money got by rapine and oppression, by spoiling the poor of their goods and their livelihood, for them and their families, which was all one as shedding innocent blood; and by money obtained by bribes, for the perversion of justice, and such like illegal proceedings, truly called iniquity. The Targum is,

“who build their houses in Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with deceits.”

FOOTNOTES:

F7 (בונה) “aedificans”, Montanus, Munster, Burkus.

F8 “Quisque eorum aedificat”, Vatablus, Piscator, Drusius.

Micah 3:11

The heads thereof judge for reward

That is, the heads or principal men of Zion and Jerusalem; the kings, or sanhedrim, according to Kimchi; but as this prophecy was delivered in the times of Hezekiah, (Jeremiah 26:18) , he who was so good a king must be excepted from this charge; perhaps it was delivered in the beginning of his reign, before a reformation was made, and might be the occasion of it: the former reign was a very wicked one; and very likely the public officers, judges, and civil magistrates, were as yet continued, and who went on in the same course of injustice, giving the cause not on the right side, but to them that gave them most money, or bribed highest, contrary to the law of God, (Deuteronomy 16:19) ;

and the priests thereof teach for hire;

for though they had a sufficient and honourable maintenance provided by the law of God for them, yet, not content with this, they took a price of the people for teaching them; and that not such things as were agreeable to the will of God declared in his word, which they ought to have done freely; but such doctrines as were most pleasing to carnal men, and indulged them in their lusts, presumption, and vain confidence:

and the prophets thereof divine for money;

tell men what should befall them; what good things they should be possessed of; what plenty and prosperity they should enjoy; and this they did according to the sum of money given them, more or less. This must be understood of the false prophets:

yet will they lean upon the Lord;

on his care, providence, and protection, as if they were filled to these things, and might securely rely and depend upon them; though by their sins and transgressions they had forfeited all the bent fits and privileges thereof. To lean by faith upon the Lord; or in his Word, as the Targum; and to trust in his promises, in his power, and faithfulness, and goodness; when this springs from an honest and upright heart, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness and holiness, it is well pleasing to God, and highly regarded by him, and such may, depend upon his blessing and protection; but to talk of faith in him, and reliance upon him, when the whole course of the conversation is wicked, this is abominable in the sight of God, and displeasing to him:

and say, [is] not the Lord among us?

trusting to this, that the temple of the Lord was among them, and that the temple of God were they; that the most holy place was there, where were the symbols of the divine Presence, the ark, cherubim, and mercy seat; and

so concluding from hence their safety and security; putting their confidence in outward places and things, in external worship, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, when they neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, truth, and mercy: and so none evil can come upon us:

as pestilence, famine, sword, and captivity, the prophets of the Lord had threatened them with.

Micah 3:12

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed [as] a field,

&c.] That is, for your sins, as the Targum; for the bloodshed, injustice, and avarice of the princes, priests, and prophets; not that the common people were free from crimes; but these are particularly mentioned, as being ringleaders into sin, and who ought to have set better examples; as also to take off their vain confidence in themselves, who thought that Zion and Jerusalem would be built up and established by them, and preserved for their sakes; as well as to show the prophet's boldness and intrepidity in his rebukes and menaces of them: now this was prophesied of in the days of Hezekiah, before the invasion of Judea and siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib; it was deferred upon the repentance and reformation of the people; and was fulfilled in part at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, when the city was reduced to a heap of rubbish; and more fully when it was destroyed by the Romans, and ploughed up by Terentius, or Turnus Rufus, as the Jews say; so that there was not a house or building left upon it, but it became utterly desolate and uninhabited, especially in the reign of Adrian:

and Jerusalem shall become heaps;

not only the city of David, built on Mount Zion, should be demolished, but the other part of the city called Jerusalem should be thrown down, and its walls and houses lie in heaps, like heaps of stones in the midst of a ploughed field:

and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest;

Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built; hence called here, by the Targum, the mountain of the house of the sanctuary; the temple upon it should be destroyed, and not one, stone left upon another; and the place on which it stood be covered with grass and trees, with briars and thorns, as a forest is, all which have been exactly fulfilled. The Jews say F9 of Turnus Rufus before mentioned, that he both ploughed up the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, the ground on which they stood; and Jerom F11 affirms the temple was ploughed up by Titus Annius Ruffus; which, as it literally

fulfilled this prophecy, denotes the utter destruction of them; for, as it was usual with the ancients to mark out with a plough the ground on which a city was designed to be built; so they drew one over the spot where any had stood, which was become desolate, and to signify that the city was no more to be rebuilt and inhabited: thus Seneca F12, Horace F13, and other writers, express the utter destruction of a city by such phrases.

FOOTNOTES:

F9 T. Hieros. Taaniot. fol. 69. 2. Juchasin, fol. 36. 2. & Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 1.

F11 Comment. in Zech. viii. 19.

F12 “Aratrum vetustis urbibus inducere”, Seneca de Clementia, l. 1. c. 26.

F13 “-----Imprimeretque muris Hostile aratrum exercitus insolens”. Hor. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 36.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 4

This chapter contains some gracious promises concerning the glory and happiness of the church of Christ in the last days; as of its stability, exaltation, and increase, and of the spread of the Gospel from it, Mic 4:1,2; and of the peace and security of it, and constant profession and exercise of religion in it, Mic 4:3-5; and of the deliverance of it from affliction and distress, and the ample and everlasting kingdom of Christ in it, Mic 4:6-8; and then follow some prophecies more particularly respecting the Jews; as that, though they should be in distress, and be carried captive into Babylon, they should be delivered from thence, Mic 4:9,10; and, though many people should be gathered against them, yet should not be able to prevail over them, but their attempts would issue in their own destruction, Mic 4:11-13.

Micah 4:1

But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains

It appears by the adversative but, with which these words are introduced, that they have a dependence upon and a connection with the last of the preceding chapter; signifying, that though “the mountain of the house”, on which the temple stood, should become desolate, yet “the mountain of the house of the Lord”, which is not literally the same, but what that was typical

of, the church of Christ, should be greatly exalted and enlarged; and which, according to this prophecy, would be “in the last days”: that is, as Kimchi rightly interprets it, the days of the Messiah; and it should be observed, that all this will be in the last of his days, or of the Gospel dispensation: the first of these days were the days of Christ in the flesh, the times of his ministry, and of John the Baptist his forerunner, and of his disciples; and were indeed the last days of the Jewish world, or of their civil and church state; and when also it must be allowed the mountain of the Lord’s house, or the temple literally taken, became glorious by the presence of Christ in it, by his doctrine and miracles there, and by the effusion of the Spirit on his disciples in that place, and the ministration of the Gospel; but then all this was before the destruction of the second temple; whereas this prophecy follows that, and is opposed to it, and supposes it; besides, in those times there was not such an exaltation and stability of the church of Christ; nor such a flow of nations to it; nor such a settled and universal peace and security as here promised: this prophecy therefore respects times yet to come, as Aben Ezra observes; the last of the days of the Messiah, or the last times of the Gospel dispensation, when the reign of antichrist will be at an end; he will be destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ set up, established, and enlarged in the world. The Prophet Isaiah predicts the same things, and much in the same words, (Isaiah 2:2-4) ; these two prophets were contemporary, and might converse together, and communicate to each other what they had received from the Lord upon this subject; but it is needless to inquire which might have them from the other, since they were both holy men of God, and moved by his Spirit, and were inspired by the same Spirit, with the same things, and to speak the same language; yet there is a diversity in words, though an agreement in sentiment nor does it appear a clear case that they borrowed, much less that they stole, their words from one other, as the false prophets did; for they do not always use the same words to convey the same idea; and there are some words which Isaiah has that Micah has not and there are others that Micah uses that Isaiah has not; though in the whole there is a most beautiful harmony of sense in their diversity of expression. By “the mountain of the house of the Lord” is not meant the temple built on Mount Moriah, where the divine Majesty resided; where were the symbols of his presence, the ark and mercy seat, and where he was worshipped, which has been destroyed long ago, and will never be rebuilt more; for a third temple hereafter to be built at Jerusalem is a mere fiction of the Jews; nor indeed is any material building here intended, and still less any such building to be erected in such an absurd sense, literally taken, as if mountain was piled on mountain, and hill on hill, to raise it higher; but, mystically and

spiritually, it designs the church of God, called so because it is built by him, and built for a habitation for him; where he will, at the time here referred to, more manifestly dwell in a spiritual manner; and by whom, and by which spiritual and gracious presence of his, it will be made very beautiful and glorious: and it is signified by a “mountain”, to denote its visibility, immovableness, and perpetuity; and is said to be “established in the top of the mountains”, with respect to the kingdoms of this world, and especially antichristian churches, which, because of their eminence, and largeness, and national establishment, may seem like mountains; but, in the latter day, the true church of Christ, which now may seem like a mole hill to them, will be above them, and will be in a settled state and condition, and not be fluctuating, and tossed to and fro, and removing here and there, as now; but be fixed and stable, and continue so until the second and personal coming of Christ:

and it shall be exalted above the hills:

by “hills” may be meant petty kingdoms, inferior to greater monarchies; or religious states, not of Christ’s constitution; and the “exaltation” of the church above them denotes her power over them, to enjoy the one, and crush the other: it may respect the glory of the church, both as to things temporal and spiritual; for now will the kingdoms under the whole heaven be given to the saints of the most High; civil government will come into their hands, the kings and princes of the earth being now members of Gospel churches; so that the church will be in a glorious and exalted state, having riches, power, and authority, a large extent everywhere, and a multitude of members, and those of the highest class and rank, as well as of the meaner and lower sort; and all of them possessed largely of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and enjoying the Gospel and Gospel ordinances in their power and purity:

and the people shall flow unto it:

in great abundance, in large numbers, in company like the flowing streams of a river; and may denote not only their numbers, but their swiftness and readiness to join themselves with the church of God, to hear the word, and partake of the ordinances, and of all the privileges of the house of the Lord. It may be rendered, “they shall look unto it”, as the word is translated in (Psalms 34:6) ; and so the Targum here,

“and the kingdoms shall look (or turn their faces) to serve upon it;”

and this sense is preferred by many learned Jewish writers F14; and the

meaning may be, that multitudes, seeing the glory of the church, and the many desirable things in it, shall look to it with a look of love and affection, and with a wishful look, greatly desiring to be admitted into it. In (Isaiah 2:2) ; it is said, “and all nations shall flow unto it”: not the people of the Jews only, now converted; or a single and, on only, or some out of that; but all the nations of the world, at least great numbers out of all, by far the greatest in them; such an increase will there be of the churches in the latter day.

FOOTNOTES:

F14 R. Saadiah, Abu Walid, R. Tanchuma apud Pocock in loc.

Micah 4:2

And many nations shall come, and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob

In (Isaiah 2:3) ; it is, “many people” the sense is the same;(See Gill on :)

and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;

the teacher is the King Messiah, as Kimchi observes; the great Prophet of his people, the teacher sent from God; and will in the last days teach men by his Spirit and word, in a very plentiful manner, and with great success:

for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;

these, according to Kimchi, are the words of the prophet, and not of the people, that encourage one another to go up to the house of the Lord; but the sense is much the same; for they contain a reason why the people of different nations would encourage one another to go to the house of the Lord, that they might learn his ways, and walk in his statutes, because here the word of the Lord is preached; the word which comes from God, and is concerning him, his love and grace to men; the word of peace and righteousness, of life and salvation, by Jesus Christ: and each of the doctrines of grace intended by the “law” or “doctrine” of the Lord; the doctrines of God’s everlasting love, of election in Christ, and redemption by him; of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and satisfaction by his atonement; as well as of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and of perseverance in grace: in these, and others, now shall all the Lord’s people be taught more clearly, distinctly, and comfortably; all shall know him, from the least to the greatest; and not only their light and

knowledge, under such a teacher and such will be very great, but their practice will be answerable to it; as they will be instructed in all the ways of the Lord, and in the methods of his grace, so they will walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; (See Gill on Isaiah 2:3).

Micah 4:3

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off

That are in the most distant parts of the world; not only the isles afar off, but the remotest parts of the continent, the American nations found out since. In (Isaiah 2:4) , it is, “and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people”; that is, the King Messiah, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech. Some render it, “it shall judge” and interpret it either of the Church, the mountain of the Lord’s house; or of the word and doctrine of the Lord; or of the Lord in the church, by the ministry of the word, The phrase, “afar off”, is not in (Isaiah 2:4) ; which the Targum interprets “for ever”, and the “strong nations” of strong kings; signifying that the kingdom of Christ should not only be to the ends or the earth, but should endure for ever, unto distant time, even till it shall be no more; as well as shall reach to distant lands, as to situation, and to the Gentiles afar off, as to state and condition; see (Ephesians 2:14) ; and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears

into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;

which as yet has never been fulfilled; but will be the case when Christ’s kingdom appears in its glory, and the kingdoms of this world become his, and all the enemies of the church are destroyed; (See Gill on Isaiah 2:4). These words are by the Jews F15 applied to the days of the Messiah.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1.

Micah 4:4

But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree

A proverbial phrase, expressive of the greatest tranquillity, security, and enjoyment of property; see (1 Kings 4:25) ; when persons need not keep

within their walled towns and cities, and lack themselves up in their houses, but may sit down in their gardens, fields, and vineyards, and enjoy the fruit thereof; as the Targum interprets it,

“under the fruit of his vine, and under, the fruit of his fig tree.”

It was usual for persons in the eastern countries to sit under vines and fig trees to read, meditate, pray, or converse together, where they grow very large, as were their vines; and even with us they are frequently raised and carried over supporters, so as to be sat under; and of fig trees, we frequently read in Jewish writings of their being very large, and of their going up to them, and praying on the top of them; and of sitting under them, and studying in the law there. So one of the Rabbins says F16, he went up into his mustard tree, as one goes up to the top of a fig tree; and it is said F17, he that prays on the top of an olive tree, or on the top of a fig tree must come down, and pray below; and again F18, R. Jacob and his companions were fasting, studying in the law, under a certain fig tree; and sometimes they speak of all these together, of sitting under olives, and under vines, and under fig trees, and studying in the words of the law F19; see (John 1:48) . This is to be understood, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi explain it, of all men; not of the Israelites only, but of all nations, since there will be no more war any where; hence it follows:

and none shall make [them] afraid;

the enemies of God’s people will be no more, neither Turk nor pope, eastern or western antichrist, beast or, false prophet; wherefore, in those days of the Messiah, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, even all the spiritual Israel of God, Jews and Gentiles; there shall be none to hurt in the holy mountain of the Lord, or any violence and oppression, wasting and destruction, anywhere; see (Jeremiah 23:5) (Isaiah 11:9) (60:18) ;

for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken [it];

who speaks nothing but truth, and who is able and faithful to perform what he has spoken; and therefore all this may be depended on.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 T. Hieros. Peah, c. 7. fol. 20. 2.

F17 T. Hieros. Beracot, c. 2. fol. 5. 1.

F18 Ib. col. 3.

F19 Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 4.

Micah 4:5**For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god**

Till those times come before described; when many nations and people shall flock to the church, and there shall be such general peace and tranquillity as here promised; till then the nations of the earth shall retain their former religion, and the profession of it, with constancy, till they are otherwise instructed, as Aben Ezra; or till the Messiah shall turn them into the right way, as Kimchi; till that time comes, the Pagans will worship their idols, and continue in the idolatry of their ancestors; the Papists will retain their image worship, and hold to their lord god the pope, as they call him; the Mahometans will cleave to their prophet, and walk according to the rules he has left them to observe. Jarchi's note is,

``they shall go to destruction because of their idolatry;''

with which he says the Targum agrees, which is,

``all nations shall go according to the idols they have worshipped;''

or, as the king of Spain's Bible,

``they shall be guilty or condemned because they have worshipped idols:''

and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever;

both in the mean while, and when those happy times shall come, and so through all generations as long as the world stands. This is the language of those that know the Lord, believe in him, and sincerely serve him; who determine in the strength of divine grace to continue in their profession of faith of him, in his worship and service, in his ways, truths, and ordinances, whatever others, do; and indeed are the more animated to it, when they observe how constant and steadfast idolaters, Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, are in their false worship, both in the profession and practice of it. The Targum is,

``we will trust in the Word of the Lord our God for ever and ever;''

in Christ the essential Word; and so the phrase is expressive of faith, and a profession of faith in him; and of constant attendance upon his word and ordinances.

Micah 4:6

In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth,

&c.] The Jews or Israelites so described; not from the halting of Jacob their father, as Abarbinel thinks; nor because of their halting between two opinions, worshipping both the true God and idols, as in the times of Elijah; for this will not suit with the Jews in their present state; but because they were like lame and maimed sheep, to which the allusion is; or because they were guilty of sins, which are sometimes expressed by halting, (Jeremiah 20:10) (Psalms 38:16 Psalms 38:17) . The word signifies such that go sideways, and not uprightly; and fitly describes such who deviate from the ways of God, and walk not according to the divine word: now “in that day” or time before referred to, the last days of the Gospel dispensation, the Lord will convert the Jews; or “heal” these lame and maimed ones, so Jarchi interprets the word; or will gather them by his Spirit and grace to the Messiah, and assemble them into his church, and among his people, and bring them into the sheepfold, under the care of the one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ:

and I will gather her that is driven out;

out of the land of Israel, and scattered among the nations of the world; even driven out by the Lord himself, because of their transgressions against him; see (Jeremiah 16:15) (24:9) ;

and her that I have afflicted;

with various calamities, with famine and sword, with captivity and poverty; the Targum adds,

“`for the sins of my people;”

the Israelites for their idolatry, and the Jews for the rejection of the Messiah, and other sins.

Micah 4:7

And I will make her that halted a remnant

That is, make a reserve of her, and not utterly cut her off for her halting or sinning; that there may be a seed, a posterity descending from her, that

shall serve the Lord, and appear to be a remnant according to the election of grace; which will be the persons called and gathered in the latter day:

and her that was cast afar off a strong nation;

Kimchi thinks this refers to the ten tribes that were carried far off into Media and other parts, (2 Kings 17:6) ; who shall now be a mighty and numerous people; and especially shall be strong in a spiritual sense in the Lord, and in the power of his might, in Christ and his grace, and in the faith of him; see (Isaiah 60:22) (Zechariah 12:8) ;

and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever;

that is, Christ, who is Jehovah our righteousness, shall reign over the converted Jews and Israelites in the church of God, often signified by Mount Zion; where they shall be assembled, and shall acknowledge him as their King, and be subject to his word and ordinances, and never more depart from him; nor will his government over them ever cease more, (Luke 1:32 Luke 1:33) . This shows that this prophecy refers not to the that times of the Gospel; for then the Jews would not have him to reign over them; but to times yet to come, the last days of the Gospel dispensation.

Micah 4:8

And thou, O tower of the flock

The words “Migdal Eder” are left by some untranslated, and think that place to be intended so called, which was near to Bethlehem, (Genesis 35:19 Genesis 35:21) ; and perhaps is the same which Jerom F20 calls the tower of Ader, about a mile from Bethlehem: this is supposed to be the place where the shepherds were watching over their flocks at the time of Christ’s birth, the tidings of which were first brought to them here; and the Jewish F21 doctors speak of it as near Jerusalem, and as a place of pasture; for they say, that cattle between Jerusalem and Migdal Eder, and in an equal space to every wind; the males were used for burnt offerings, and the females for peace offerings; and this place is thought to be referred to in the latter clause of this verse: others think that Bethlehem itself is meant, to which the dominion came; but rather, as in the next chapter, the ruler came out of that; others think that the gate in Jerusalem called the sheep gate is meant, (Nehemiah 3:32) ; and the tower at it, through which Christ is supposed to pass when he entered into Jerusalem as King, amidst the Hosannahs of the people; others take it to be the same with the tower of David, and put for Jerusalem itself, whither the tribes were gathered together three times a year, like sheep in a fold, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; here others interpret

it spiritually of the church of Christ; but though that is sometimes spoken of as a strong city, and a fortified place, yet is never called a tower, or a strong hold; which phrases, when figuratively used, are always spoken of a divine person; see (Psalms 18:2) (Proverbs 18:10) (Zechariah 9:12) ; and here of the Messiah; and so the Targum interprets it,

“O Christ of Israel:”

the church indeed is the “flock”: the people of God are often compared to sheep for their harmlessness and innocence, and the church to a flock of them, which is Christ’s flock he feeds like a shepherd; the flock of slaughter, a little one, consisting of persons separated from the world, and under his peculiar care; and he is the tower of this flock, in allusion to a shepherd’s cottage, called a tower, as a cottage in a vineyard is in (Isaiah 5:2) ; where the shepherds watch, and into which they bring the sick and lame, and take care of them; Christ is a high tower, where his people are safe out of the reach of their enemies; and a strong one, being the mighty God and mighty Saviour, who has all power and strength to defend his church and people, and may be well called their tower:

and the strong hold of the daughter of Zion;

“the daughter of Zion” is the church, particularly the church of the converted Jews; Christ is the strong hold of it, into which, as prisoners of hope, they will be directed to turn, (Zechariah 9:12) ; a strong refuge he is to flee unto from the avenger of blood, the justice of God; from the curses of the law; from the storm of divine wrath; from the temptations of Satan, and from the persecutions of men; a strong hold is he to dwell in, and where the saints dwell safely, pleasantly, at ease and peace, and very comfortably, and in great plenty; a strong hold for shelter from every enemy:

unto thee shall it come;

not the kingdom, as follows, which our version leads to, and is the sense of Aben Ezra; for there is a considerable accent on the word “come”, which makes a large stop; and that it refers, as Jarchi observes, to “her that halteth” “it” or “she” that halteth shall come, being assembled and gathered, or converted by the grace of God unto the Messiah; as to her, or their tower and strong hold, where all blessings of grace, and the supplies of it, and all salvation and safety, are to be had and enjoyed. The promise respects the Jews coming to Christ upon their conversion, even such who have been the halt, the maimed, the lame, and the blind:

even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem;

or rather, “and the first dominion shall come, the kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem”: meaning, not the first notice of the Messiah’s kingdom, given by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, to the Jews, in the first times of the Gospel; or the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom first to them; but rather he who has the first or principal dominion, and to whom the kingdom belongs, he shall come to the daughter of Zion, as in (Zechariah 9:9) ; though it rather respects here his coming to them at the time of their conversion, when they shall come to him, (Romans 11:26) ; and when the first, chief, and principal kingdom in the world, and which is preferable to all others, will come unto, and be placed among them, as in (Micah 4:7) ; and when it shall be, as some interpret it, as at the beginning, in the days of David and Solomon, and much more abundantly.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 De locis Hebr. fol. 89. E.

F21 T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 63. 1. T. Ban. Kiddushin, fol. 55. 1. Misn. Shekalim, c. 7. sect. 4.

Micah 4:9

Now why dost thou cry out aloud?

&c.] Or “cry a cry” F23; a vehement one, or set up a most lamentable cry, as if no help or hope were to be had, but as in the most desperate condition: here the prophet represents the Jews as if they were already in captivity, and in the utmost distress, and as they certainly would be; and yet had no reason to despair of deliverance and salvation, since the Messiah would certainly come to them, and his kingdom would be set up among them, The word used has sometimes the notion of friendship and association; hence the Targum renders it,

“now why art thou joined to the people?”

and so Jarchi,

“thou hast no need to seek friends and lovers, the kings of Egypt and Assyria, for help.”

And which sense of the word as approved by Gussetius F24.
[Is there] no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished?

he it so that they were; as was the case when Zedekiah was taken and carried captive, and his princes, nobles, and counsellors killed; yet God, their King and Counsellor, was with them, to keep and preserve them, counsel, instruct, and comfort them, and at last to deliver and save them; and the King Messiah would be raised up, and sent unto them in due time, who is the Wonderful Counsellor Isaiah had prophesied of:

for pangs have taken thee as a worn an in travail;

which is often expressive of great sufferings and sorrows; and yet, as the pangs of a woman in travail do not continue always, but have an end, so would theirs, and therefore there was no reason for despair; and as, when she brings forth her issue, her sorrow is turned into joy, this would be their case.

FOOTNOTES:

F23 (er yeyrt hml) “quid vociferabis vociferationem”, Pagninus, Montanus. So Vatablus, Drusius.

F24 Ebr. Comment. p. 789.

Micah 4:10

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail

Bear thy troubles and calamities, sufferings and sorrows, patiently, and expect deliverance from them, as a woman in such circumstances does: or, as some render it in the future, “thou shalt be in pain” F25; and so is a prediction of their distress and captivity, which is expressed in plainer terms in the following clauses:

for now shalt thou go forth out of the city;

the city of Jerusalem; either by flight, in a private and secret manner, as Zedekiah and his princes, and part of his army did; or by force, being taken and led out by the enemy:

and thou shalt dwell in the field;

being turned out of their houses, they were obliged to lodge in the fields, while they were collected together, and in a body marched as captives to Babylon; and while on the road lay in the open fields, and not in houses, who had been used to dwell in a city, and in their panelled houses; but now even their city itself was ploughed like a field, as before predicted: and thou shalt go [even] to Babylon;

to the city of Babylon, as their king did, and many of them also; and

others of them into various parts of that kingdom: this is a clear prophecy of the Babylonish captivity, which came to pass upwards of a hundred years after this:

there shalt thou be delivered;

after seventy years captivity, by the hand of Cyrus; who taking the city of Babylon, and making himself master of the whole empire, delivered the Jews from their bondage, and gave them liberty to return to their own land: there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies;

the Chaldeans: and this was typical of the deliverance and redemption of all the Lord's people from the hand of all their spiritual enemies; from Satan and the world, law, death, and hell; by the blood of the great Redeemer, and near kinsman of his people, the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 (חול'י) "dolebis ac suspirabis", so some in Vatablus.

Micah 4:11

Now also many nations are gathered against thee

Which is to be understood, not of Sennacherib's army invading Judea, and besieging Jerusalem, in Hezekiah's time; for that was not threshed, as the phrase is afterwards used, or destroyed by the daughter of Zion, but by an angel from heaven: nor of the Babylonians or Chaldeans, since they succeeded in their attempt, and were the conquerors, and not conquered: rather this respects the times of the Maccabees, as the series of prophecy and history agreeing together shows; in which times many of the neighbouring nations of the Jews gave them a great deal of trouble, and especially Antiochus king of Syria; and many and mighty armies sent by him. The Jews, as Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Abarbinel F26, interpret this of the armies of Gog and Magog, in the times of their vainly expected Messiah. Some Christian interpreters, with much more probability, understand this passage of the first times of the Gospel, and the opposition made to that and the Christian church, which yet in the issue prevailed; and perhaps it may have reference to the last times, and receive its full accomplishment in the battle at Armageddon, (Revelation 16:14-16) (19:19-21) ;

that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion;

either defiled with sin; so the Targum,

``that say, when will she sin, and our eye shall behold the

fall of Zion?”

as the effect of her sin: or, as others, “let her play the hypocrite” {a}; and be condemned as such: or rather, be defiled with slaughter and bloodshed, that they might be delighted with so pleasing a sight, and their eyes might feed with pleasure on an object so agreeable to their wishes.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 62. 1.

F1 (תחנף “hypocrita fuit”, Tigurine version; velut hypocrita damnatur”, Tarnovius; “hypocrisi contaminabitur, Cocceius.

Micah 4:12

But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel

Which are very different from theirs: the thoughts and designs of the enemies of Zion, in the times of the Maccabees, were, to destroy utterly the people of God, and root them out of the earth, and abolish their religion and worship; but the intentions of God were to defeat them, and bring them to ruin: the views of the kings of the earth, being stirred up by unclean spirits to the battle of Almighty God, will be to extirpate the interest and kingdom of Christ; but the end of the Lord, in suffering them to be gathered together, will be utterly and totally to destroy them; and the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart, to all generations. Men know their own designs, but they do not know the designs of the Lord; they intend the ruin of others, but God intends to bring about theirs; and his intentions are never frustrated, but theirs are;

for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor;

as, when the harvest is ripe, it is cut down, and bound up in sheaves, and brought home, and these are laid in order upon the floor to be threshed; so, when the nations of the earth are fully ripe for ruin, God will put, or order to be put; in the sickle, and cut them down, and bind them in bundles, and lay them on his threshingfloor of wrath and vengeance, and utterly destroy them contrary to their views and expectations.

Micah 4:13

Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion

The nations gathered against her, and now laid together on the floor as sheaves to be threshed. Here the people of God are aroused, and called out of a low and weak estate, and are animated and encouraged to exert themselves, and fall upon their enemies, and destroy them; alluding to the threshing of grain on the floor, the metaphor being here carried on from (Micah 4:12) . The Targum is,

``arise, and kill, O congregation of Zion;”

for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass;

signifying that the Lord would give them strength sufficient to such work, and such power their enemies should not be able to resist and overcome; and that they should into their hands, and be crushed, trod, and trampled on by them, and utterly subdued. The allusion is to oxen that have horns and hoofs; and it suggests that they should be as strong as they; have horns like them, that is, power to push down their enemies and hoofs to trample upon them: or as these creatures have a horny substance on their feet, or hoofs, which are strong, and fit for the purposes of treading out corn, for which they were used in the eastern countries, drawing after them iron wheels, or planks stuck with flints; so horses and oxen that have strong feet, and hard hoofs, are said to have feet of brass F2; thus the Lord’s people should have such courage, force, and power, as not only to withstand their enemies, but to obtain a conquest over them The Targum is,

``I will make the people in them strong as iron, and their remnant firm as brass;”

which was true of, and accomplished in, Judas Maccabeus and his brethren; and will be more clearly fulfilled in the Christian kings and princes in the latter day, when engaged with the antichristian states;

and thou shalt beat in pieces many people;

as the Maccabees did subdue many people and nations, as all Palestine, Moab, Idumea, Samaria, and Iturea, as Josephus F3 relates; and as the Christian princes will beat in pieces, and utterly destroy, all the antichristian kings of the earth, their states and kingdoms, and bring them into subjection to them:

and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth;

that is, to Christ, who in the last day will appear to be King and Lord of the whole earth; and all the riches of the antichristian nations, Pagan,

Papal, and Mahometan, will be devolved to, and employed in, his interest and service; see (Revelation 21:24) ; these are the words of God the Father, with respect to his Son Jesus Christ; who will now have a dominion, glory, and kingdom given him, by the ancient of days, that so all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him, (Daniel 7:14) ; of which there might be some type and shadow in the times of the Maccabees.

FOOTNOTES:

F2 (χαλκοποδ ἵππῳ) “aeripedes equos”, Homer. Iliad. 8. v. 41.

F3 Antiqu. 1. 13. c. 15. sect. 4.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 5

This chapter begins with a prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, Mic 5:1; and then follows another concerning the place of the Messiah’s birth, Mic 5:2; and of the case of the Jews, either before or after it, Mic 5:3; and of Christ’s office as a shepherd, and of his grandeur in the world, Mic 5:4; and of his being a peacemaker, and protector of his people from their enemies, Mic 5:5,6; and of his people, the great increase of them, and their usefulness, and also of their courage, strength, and prowess, Mic 5:7-9; likewise that the Lord will remove from them their vain confidence, and all occasion of it, and whatsoever illicit arts and practices were found among them; and all idolatry, and the instruments of it, Mic 5:10-14; and the chapter is concluded with a threatening of vengeance to the Heathens, Mic 5:15.

Micah 5:1

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops

Not Jerusalem, full of people, called to draw out their forces, and fall upon the enemy besieging them, whether Chaldeans or Romans; but rather the Babylonians, whose armies were large, and their troops numerous; who are called upon by the people of God, encouraged by the foregoing prophecies, as well as by what follows, to come forth with all their forces, and muster up all their armies, and exert all the power and strength they had, thus suiting them; being assured, by the above promises, that in the issue they should prevail over all their enemies: unless the Romans should be intended, to whom this character of “daughter of troops” well agrees, of whose legions all have heard; and since the Babylonish attempt

on Jerusalem, and the carrying the Jews captive into Babylon, are before predicted, with their deliverance from it, and what they should do in the times of the Maccabees; a prophecy of the Romans, or a representation of them, a gathering their troops and legions together to besiege Jerusalem, very naturally comes in here;

he hath laid siege against us;

either Nebuchadnezzar, and the Chaldean army; or Vespasian with the Romans: this, according to the prophetic style, is spoken of as if actually done, because of the certainty of it;

they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;

that is, either they, the besiegers, the king of Babylon and his army, when they shall have taken Jerusalem, besieged by them, shall use Zedekiah the king of Judah, and judge of Israel, and his princes and nobles, very ill, signified by this phrase; yea, in a very cruel and barbarous manner; first slaying his sons and his princes before his eyes, then putting his eyes out, binding him in chains, and carrying him to Babylon, and there laying him in a prison, (Jeremiah 52:10 Jeremiah 52:11) ; or else they, the besieged, would use the Messiah, the King, Judge, and Ruler in Israel, in such a spiteful and scandalous manner; and so the Messiah was to be used by them, who according to prophecy gave his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting; and so Jesus, the true Messiah, was smitten, both with rods, and with the palms of men's hands, and buffeted and spit upon, (Isaiah 50:6) (Matthew 26:67) ; and this is mentioned as a reason why Jerusalem would be encompassed with the Roman armies, and besieged by their troops and legions, and become desolate, even for their rejection and ill usage of the Messiah. Aben Ezra says, it is right in my eyes that the judge of Israel is the Messiah, or Zerubbabel; not the latter, who never was so used, but the former.

Micah 5:2

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah

But though Jerusalem should be besieged and taken, and the land of Judea laid waste, yet, before all this should be, the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, of which this is a prophecy, as is evident from (Matthew 2:4-6) ; the place is called by both the names it went by, to point it out the more distinctly, and with the greater certainty, (Genesis 35:19) ; the former signifies "the house of bread", and a proper place for Christ to be born in, who is the bread of life; and it has the name of the latter from its fruitfulness, being a place of pasture, and as we find it was at the time of

our Lord's birth; for near it shepherds were then watching over their flocks; and it is here added, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, (Joshua 19:15) ; from which tribe the Messiah was not to come, but from the tribe of Judah; and in which this Bethlehem was, and therefore called, by Matthew, Bethlehem in the land of Judah; as it appears this was, from (Ruth 1:1 Ruth 1:2) ; and from the Septuagint version of (Joshua 15:60) , where, as Jerom observes, it was added by the Greek interpreters, or erased out of the Hebrew text by the wickedness of the Jews: the former seems most correct;

[though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah;

this supplement of ours is according to Kimchi's reading and sense of the words; which, in some measure, accounts for the difference between the prophet and the Evangelist Matthew, by whom this place is said to be "not the least", (Matthew 2:6) , as it might, and yet be little; besides, it might be little at one time, in Micah's time, yet not little at another time; in Matthew's; it might be little with respect to some circumstances, as to pompous buildings, and number of inhabitants, and yet not little on account of its being the birth place of great men, as Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah: or the words may be rendered with an interrogation, "art thou little?" &c. F4; thou art not: or thus, it is a "little [thing] to be among the thousands of Judah" F5; a greater honour shall be put upon thee, by being the place of the Messiah's birth. Moreover, Mr, Pocock has shown out of R. Tanchum, both in his commentary on this place, and elsewhere F6, that the word (ryeu) signifies both "little" and "great", or of great note and esteem. The tribes of Israel were divided into tens, hundreds, and thousands, over which there was a head or prince; hence, in Matthew, these are called "the princes of Judah", (Matthew 2:6) ;

[yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel;

not Hezekiah, who very probably was now born at the time of this prophecy; nor was he born at Bethlehem, nor a ruler in Israel, only king of Judah: nor Zerubbabel, who was born in Babylon, as his name shows, was governor of Judah, but not of Israel; nor can it be said of him, or any mere man, what is said in the next clause: but the Messiah is intended, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi confess, and other Jewish writers. The Targum is,

``out of thee shall come forth before me the Messiah, that he may exercise dominion over Israel."

Jarchi's note is,

“out of thee shall come forth unto me Messiah, the son of David;”

and so he says, “the stone which the builders refused” (Psalms 118:22) ; plainly suggesting that that passage also belongs to the Messiah, as it certainly does. Kimchi's paraphrase is,

“although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah.”

And Abarbinel F7, mentioning those words in (Micah 4:13) ; “arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion”, observes,

“this speaks concerning the business of the King Messiah, who shall reign over them, and shall be the Prince of their army; and it is plain that he shall be of the house of David: and it is said, “O thou, Bethlehem Ephratah”, which was a small city, in the midst of the cities of Judah; and “although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me” a man, a ruler in Israel, “whose goings forth are from the days of old”; the meaning is, the goings forth of the family of that ruler are from the days of old; that is, from the seed of David, and a rod from the stem of Jesse, who was of Bethlehem Judah.”

So Abendana F8, a more modern Jew, paraphrases the words thus,

“out of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, that is to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah; for because he is to be of the seed of David, from Bethlehem he will be.”

To which may be added R. Isaac F9, who, having cited this passage, observes, and, he, the ruler in Israel, is the King Messiah, who shall come forth from the seed of David the king; who was of Bethlehem Judah, as in (1 Samuel 17:12) . Wherefore Lyra, having quoted Jarchi, and given his sense of the passage, remarks, hence it is plain that some Catholics, explaining this Scripture of King Hezekiah, “judaize” more than the

Hebrews. Though some of them object the application of it to Jesus, who they say ruled not over Israel, but Israel over him, and put him to death; which it is true they did; but God exalted him to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour, unto Israel, notwithstanding that, and declared him to be Lord and Christ; besides, previous to his death, and in the land of Israel, he gave abundant proof of his power and rule over universal nature, earth, air, and sea; over angels, good and bad; and over men and beasts: all creatures obeyed him; though indeed his kingdom is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature, and is over the spiritual Israel of God; and there is a time coming when he will be King over all the earth. Now out of Bethlehem was the King Messiah, the ruler in Israel, to come forth; that is, here he was to be born, as the phrase signifies; see (Genesis 10:14) ; and here our Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, as appears from (Matthew 2:8 Matthew 2:11) (Luke 2:1-6 Luke 2:11 Luke 2:15 Luke 2:16) ; and this is not only certain from the evangelic history, but the Jews themselves acknowledge it. One of their chronologers F11 affirms that Jesus the Nazarene was born at Bethlehem Judah, a parsa and a half from Jerusalem; that is, about six miles from it, which was the distance between them: and even the author of a blasphemous book F12, pretending to give the life of Jesus, owns that Bethlehem Judah was the place of his nativity: and it is clear not only that the Jews in the times of Jesus expected the Messiah to come from hence, even both the chief priests and scribes of the people, who, in answer to Herod's question about the place of the Messiah's birth, direct him to this, according to Micah's prophecy, (Matthew 2:4-6) ; and the common people, who thought to have confronted the Messiahship of Jesus with it, (John 7:41 John 7:42) ; but others also, at other times. The tower of Edar being a place near to Bethlehem Ephratah, (Genesis 35:19 Genesis 35:21) ; Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum of (Genesis 35:19) , says of the tower of Edar, this is the place from whence the King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of days; nay, some of them say he is born already, and was born at Bethlehem. An Arabian, they say F13, told a Jew,

`` the King Messiah is born; he replied to him, what is his name? he answered, Menachem (the Comforter) is his name; he asked him, what is his father's name? he replied, Hezekiah; he said to him, from whence is he? he answered, from the palace of the king of Bethlehem Judah."

This same story is told elsewhere F14, with some little variation, thus, that the Arabian should say to the Jew,

“the Redeemer of the Jews is both; he said to him, what is his name? he replied, Menachem is his name; and what is his father’s name? he answered, Hezekiah; and where do they dwell? (he and his father;) he replied, in Birath Arba, in Bethlehem Judah.”

These things show their sense of this prophecy, and the convictions of their minds as to the births of the Messiah, and the place of it. The words “unto me” are thought by some to be redundant and superfluous; but contain in them the glory and Gospel of the text, whether considered as the words of God the Father; and then the sense is, that Christ was to come forth in this place in human nature, or become incarnate, agreeably to the purpose which God purposed in himself; to the covenant made with him, before the world was; to an order he had given him as Mediator, and to his promise concerning him; and he came forth to him, and answered to all these; as well as this was in order to do his will and work, by fulfilling the law; preaching the Gospel; doing miracles; performing the work of redemption and salvation; by becoming a sacrifice for sin, and suffering death; and likewise it was for the glorifying of all the divine perfections: or whether as the words of the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, to and for whom he was born, or became incarnate; he came forth unto them, to be their Mediator in general; to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them in particular; to execute each of his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and to answer and fill up all relations he stands in to them, of Father, Brother, Head, and Husband;

whose goings forth [have been] of old, from everlasting;

which is said of him, not because his extraction was from David, who lived many ages before him; for admitting he was “in [him], in his loins”, as to his human nature, so long ago, yet his “goings forth” were not from thence: nor because he was prophesied of and promised very early, as he was from the beginning of the world; but neither a prophecy nor promise of him can be called his “going forth”; which was only foretold and spoken of, but not in actual being; nor because it was decreed from eternity that he should come forth from Bethlehem, or be born there in time; for this is saying no more than what might be said of everyone that was to be born in Bethlehem, and was born there: nor is this to be understood of his manifestations or appearances in a human form to the patriarchs, in the several ages of time; since to these, as to other of the above things, the phrase “from everlasting” cannot be ascribed: but either of his going forth

in a way of grace towards his people, in acts of love to them, delighting in those sons of men before the world was; in applying to his Father on their account, asking them of him, and betrothing them to himself; in becoming their surety, entering into a covenant with his Father for them, and being the head of election to them, receiving all blessings and promises of grace for them: or else of his eternal generation and sonship, as commonly interpreted; who the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, and a distinct person from him; the eternal Word that went forth from him, and was with him from eternity, and is truly God. The phrases are expressive of the eternity of his divine nature and person; Jarchi compares them with (Psalms 72:17) ; “before the sun was, his name was Jinnon”; that is, the Son, the Son of God; so as the former part of the text sets forth his human birth, this his divine generation; which, cause of the excellency and ineffableness of it, is expressed in the plural number, “goings forth”. So Eliezer F15, along with the above mentioned passage in the Psalms, produces this to prove the name of the Messiah before the world was, whose “goings forth [were] from everlasting”, when as yet the world was not created.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 (יֵרֵךְ לְהוֹיֹת בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה) “parvulane es?” Drusius; “parvane sis?” Grotius; “parva es?” Cocceius.

F5 “Parum est ut sis inter chiliarchas Judae”, Osiander, Grotius; “vile, ignominiosum est, esse inter millia Judae”, De Dieu.

F6 Not. Misn. in Port. Mosis, p. 17, 18.

F7 Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 62. col. 2.

F8 Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

F9 Chizzuk Emuah, par. 1. p. 279.

F11 R. David Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 14. 2.

F12 Toldos Jesu, p. 7. Ed. Wagenseil.

F13 T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1.

F14 Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1.

F15 Pirke Eliezer, c. 3. fol. 2. 2.

Micah 5:3

Therefore will he give them up

Or “notwithstanding”, as this particle signifies; see (Hosea 2:14) ; though all this shall be, yet, previous to the birth of this person, the Lord would give up the Jews to trouble and distress, and into the hands of their

enemies; and the time from this prophet to the birth of Christ was a time for the most part of great trouble to, the Jews; not only was their country invaded and their city besieged by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's time, but, some years after that, they were wholly carried captive into Babylon: and when they returned it was troublesome times with them; they met with many enemies that disturbed them while they were rebuilding the city and temple; and after that they endured much tribulation, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, or of the Maccabees; nor were they long in any quiet, nor in any settled state, unto the coming of the Messiah. Or else this is to be understood of what should be after his coming; for though Jesus was born at Bethlehem, according to this plain prophecy, and had all the characters of the Messiah in him, yet the Jews rejected him, and would not have him to reign over them: wherefore he, the Messiah, as Japhet interprets it, gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and into the hands of their enemies the Romans; by whom they were destroyed or carried captive, and dispersed among the nations; in which condition they still remain, and will, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; so long will Jerusalem be trodden under foot, or the Jews be given up to their will, according to (Luke 21:24) ; or, as here expressed,

until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth:

that is, according to the first sense until the Virgin Mary travailed in birth with the Messiah, and brought forth him her firstborn, (Matthew 1:25) ; or according to the latter, until Zion, or, the church of God, travailed in prayer, in the ministry of the word, and brought forth many children to Christ, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the sense is, that the Jews shall be given up to distress and trouble, till the time of their conversion, see (Isaiah 66:7 Isaiah 66:8) ; The Jews have a tradition in their Talmud, that

“the son of David would not come until the kingdom spreads itself over the whole world for nine months; as it is said, “therefore will he give them up until the time that she that travaileth hath brought” forth; which is the time of a woman's going with child.”

This both Jarchi and Kimchi take notice of. In one place F16 it is called the kingdom of Aram or Syria; and in another F17 a blank is left for Edom, that is, Rome; for by the kingdom is meant the Roman empire, and which did extend all over the world before the coming of the Messiah Jesus, as appears from (Luke 2:1) ; as well as from all profane history;

then the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel;

that is, the brethren of the Messiah, as Kimchi and Abendana interpret it; who should return with the children of Israel, as both they and Jarchi explain it; to which the Targum agrees. Kimchi's note is,

``the remnant of his brethren"; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which remained when the ten tribes were carried captive; and the surnames, his brethren, relate to the Messiah."

So Abendana F18,

``and "the remnant his brethren"; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they shall return with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes; as if he should say, these and these shall return to their land, and King Messiah shall reign over them; and the surnames, his brethren, respect the Messiah."

And to the same purpose R. Isaac F19,

``the remnant of the brethren of the Messiah, who are the children of Judah and Benjamin, that are left and remain of the calamities and persecutions of the captivities, shall return to their own land, together with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes."

Meaning either the remnant, according to the election of grace, among the Gentiles; who with those among the Jews should be converted to Christ in the first times of the Gospel, those immediately following the birth of Christ; the Gospel being preached both to the Jews and Gentiles, and some of both were called and converted, and whom Christ owned as his brethren, and were not ashamed of; see (Matthew 12:49 Matthew 12:50) (Hebrews 2:11) ; or the Lord's chosen people, and brethren of Christ, those of, he two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and those of the ten tribes of Israel; who shall join and coalesce together in seeking the Messiah, embracing and professing him, and appointing him the one Head over them, when they will turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; see (Jeremiah 50:4) (Hosea 1:11) (Romans 11:25 Romans 11:26) .

FOOTNOTES:

- F16 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1.
 F17 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.
 F18 Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.
 F19 Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.

Micah 5:4

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord

The ruler in Israel, before described and prophesied of; the Messiah, as Kimchi himself interprets it, and other Jewish writers. Kimchi's note is,

“after the affliction, the King Messiah shall stand and feed Israel in the strength of the Lord;”

and so R. Isaac F20 paraphrases the words exactly in the same way: wherefore, as another learned Jew F21 observes, these expressions evince that the ruler here spoken of can be no other than the Messiah; not Zerubbabel, who never attained to this height and happiness. He is both King and Shepherd, and to each of these the act of feeding is ascribed. The same word, in the Greek language, signifies both to rule and to feed and is used by Matthew, (Matthew 2:6) ; and kings are often compared to shepherds. Christ feeds his people, his brethren, his flock, his sheep, and lambs all truly converted ones; and this takes in the whole office of a shepherd, and the care he has of his flock; he takes an exact account of them, goes before them, and leads them out into good pastures; sets under shepherds over them; protects them from, all their enemies; looks after what is lost or driven away; heals the sick, strengthens the weak, binds up the broken, and watches over his flock continually: he feeds them with, himself, the bread of life, with his flesh and blood, which are meat and drink indeed; with the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and which are found to be spiritual, savoury, strengthening, satisfying, and soul nourishing food: and he “stands” and does this, being raised from the dead, and possessed of all power in heaven and in earth; which designs not the position of his body, but the ministration of his office, and his alacrity and readiness to perform it, and his constancy in it: and all this “in the strength of the Lord”; in his own strength, as a divine Person, which is the same with the strength of Jehovah; and in the power and strength that is dispensed to him as Mediator; and with his Gospel, the rod of his strength, and in such manner as to defend his flock from all that would devour them:

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God;

Jehovah the Father is the God of Christ, as is Mediator; and his name is in him, even the majesty of it; for, as a divine Person, he has the same nature and perfections with him; and as man, exalted at his right hand, has a name above every name in this world, or that to come; and it is by authority from him, in his office capacity, that he rules and feeds his people, having all judgment committed to him:

and they shall abide;

that is, his people, his flock, his sheep fed and ruled by him; these shall continue and persevere under his care and keeping; in him, in whom they are chosen and preserved; in his love, from which they can never be separated; in his hands, out of which none can pluck them; in his church, where they shall ever remain; and so may be considered as a promise of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness to the end: or, “they shall sit” F23; quietly and securely, being freed from persecution, with which the Christians were at, ended in the first three centuries: this began to be accomplished in the times of Constantius Chlorus, who helped the Christians in the times of Dioclesian, and with whom the persecutions ended, and peace and prosperity followed:

for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth;

as, he was in the times of Constantine, and will be again. Christ is great in himself, in, his person and offices; and will appear to be so unto all men, even unto the ends of the earth, when his Gospel shall be preached and spread, everywhere; when his kingdom shall be enlarged, and be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; even then shall he appear to be a great King over all the earth, and, the great Shepherd of the sheep, the man, Jehovah’s fellow; and to have such a flock, and so large, as never any had; when there will be one fold, and one shepherd; for this prophecy respects the latter day glory. Kimchi’s gloss is,

“the name of the Messiah shall be magnified, after the judgment of the wicked.”

FOOTNOTES:

F20 Ibid. (Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.)

F21 Tanchuma apud Pocock in loc.

F23 (ישבו) “sedebunt”, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Drusius; “considebunt”, Cocceius; so R. Isaac, “they shall sit safely in his time”, as is said above, ch. iv. 4. “they shall sit every man” Chizzuk Emunah, ut supra. (par. 1. p. 281.)

Micah 5:5

And this [man] shall be the peace

The word man is not in the text, only this; and refers to the person before spoken of, who was to be born in Bethlehem, to be the ruler in Israel, that should stand and feed his people, and should be great to the ends of the earth; and is no other than the Messiah, as Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, own, Kimchi's note is,

``this peace respects the Messiah; for he shall be the cause or author of peace; as it is said, "he shall speak peace unto the Heathen", (Zechariah 9:10);"

and R. Isaac F24 expresses his sense of the words in much the same language; and it is an observation the Jews sometimes make, and which they give as a sign of the Messiah's coming,

``when you see a Persian horse bound in the land of Israel, look for the feet of the Messiah;"

which is the sense of (Micah 5:5) ; "this shall be the peace, when the Assyrian comes into our land" F25 so Jesus the true Messiah is called "our peace", (Ephesians 2:14) ; and is the cause and author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and men; which he has made by the blood of his cross, and speaks and gives peace to men; and he is the author of peace in his churches, whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace, of which there will be an abundance in the latter day; for all which he would not be sufficient was he a mere man; though it was proper he should be a man, that he might have blood to shed, a body to offer up, and in it die to procure peace; and yet be more than a man, God also, to put virtue and efficacy into what he did and suffered to obtain it, as well as to secure and continue the peace of his people, and preserve them from all their enemies: **when the Assyrian shall come into our land;**

not Sennacherib king of Assyria; though by the invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, he might have lately been concerned in, and by reason of the terror which that had raised in the people; the Assyrian may be here put for any powerful enemy of the people of God in later times; or Satan, and his principalities and powers, even all the powers of darkness Christ our peacemaker engaged with, at the time he made peace by his sufferings

and death; and perhaps may chiefly design the Turk, the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, as Mr. Mede F26 thinks, that will enter into the land of Judea, in order to take it out of the hands of the Jews, who will be possessed of it upon their conversion to Christ; but he by his instruments will secure to them the possession of it, and their peace and prosperity in it:

and when he shall tread in our palaces;

the palaces of our princes, and nobles, and great men, at least attempt to do it:

then shall we raise against him;

the Assyrian, or whatsoever enemy is meant by him: or, “with him”, that is, the Messiah, as Kimchi and others F1 interpret it. The Targum is,

“` then will we appoint over us;”

which sense the above writer wonders at, as being contrary to the Hebrew text:

seven shepherds, and eight principal men;

that is, many, as the phrase is used in (Ecclesiastes 11:2) ; to which passage Aben Ezra and Kimchi refer us; these are, as the last mentioned writer and others say F2, the princes of the Messiah; and, according to the ancient F3 Jewish Rabbins, the seven shepherds are particularly these, David in the midst, Adam, Seth, Methuselah, on his right hand (Kimchi has it, Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah), and Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, on his left hand; and the eight principal men are, Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zedekiah (in Kimchi and Rabbot it is Hezekiah), Elijah, and the Messiah; but, as Aben Ezra, not fifteen persons are designed, at most but eight, according to this form of speech in (Proverbs 30:15 Proverbs 30:18 Proverbs 30:21 Proverbs 30:24 Proverbs 30:29) (Amos 1:3) ; &c. Calmet F4 takes those seven or eight shepherds to be the seven princes confederate with Darius the son of Hystaspes, who killed Smerdis the Magian, who had possessed himself of the empire of the Persians, after the death of Cambyses; but Smerdis was not an Assyrian, nor is the kingdom of Persia here meant, but the land of Judea; and the prophecy respects the times of the Messiah, who should appear there, and where would be raised up men to support his interest: and if conjecture may be allowed, as this may be understood of the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, the princes of the Messiah, who were raised up, at the prayer and request of the church, to oppose Satan and his emissaries, in the first times of the Gospel; by these may be meant the writers of the New Testament, the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Apostles Peter, James, and Jude,

which make the seven shepherds; and if you add to these the Apostle Paul, they will make eight principal men; or rather I should think the seven angels are pointed at, that shall pour out the last plagues on the antichristian states; to which, if another angel is added, that will proclaim the fall of Babylon, the same number will be made up; see (Revelation 16:1) (18:1) ; and who will assist the Jews against the Turks, when they shall attempt to dispossess them of their land, they shall again inherit.

FOOTNOTES:

F24 Ut supra. (Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.)

F25 Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 3.

F26 Works, l. 4. Ep. 41. p. 796.

F1 Vid. Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 282.

F2 Ibid.

F3 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 26. 3.

F4 Dictionary, in the word “Shepherds”.

Micah 5:6

And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword

Or “feed F5 upon it” with the sword, destroy the inhabitants of it; either spiritually subdue the nations of the world to the obedience of Christ, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the preaching of the Gospel, the ministry of the apostles, and others, in the Gentile world; see (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) (Ephesians 6:17) ; or literally, meaning that the angels of the vials, the Christian princes, shall destroy the Ottoman empire with the sword:

and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof;

the same with Babylon, the empire of which was first set up by Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, (Genesis 10:11) ; the same with Nebrodas, a name of Bacchus, which is no other than Barchus the son of Chus, as Nimrod was the son of Cush, and Bacchus was a mighty hunter, as he was; all which Bochart F6 has observed: now his country was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar, that is, the land of Babylon, as the Targum of Onkelos and Jerusalem in (Genesis 10:10) , render it; though some think Nimrod extended his dominions into Assyria; and translate F7 (Micah 5:11) “out of that land, he” (that is, Nimrod) “went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah”; and the Targum of Jonathan is very express for it, which paraphrases the

words thus,

“out of that land went forth Nimrod, and he reigned in Assyria, because he would not be in the counsel of the generation of the division, and he left these four cities; and the Lord gave him a place (or Assyria), and he built four other cities, Nineveh”

hence some F8 have thought that the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod here design one and the same country; but Ashur, in the text in Genesis, seems rather to be the name of a man than of a place, even of the son of Shem so called, from whom the country of Assyria had its name; whereas, if had been so soon in the hands of Nimrod, and so many cities had been built by him in it, it would rather have been called by his name than Ashur’s; and it seems most reasonable to conclude that the cities of Nineveh were built by the latter, and not the former; and the two countries of Assyria and Nimrod, or Babylon, are very plainly in this text distinguished from one another; though they might at the time of this prophecy be united under Esarhaddon, who was both king of Assyria and Babylon; and at this present time they are both in the hands of the Turks, and in all probability will be until this prophecy is fulfilled in the destruction of them by the Christian princes: the same thing is meant as before; and the word rendered “in the entrances thereof” may as well be translated “with its sword” F9; or, as the margin of our Bibles, “with her own naked swords”; so Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it:

thus shall he deliver [us] from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders;

that is, the King Messiah shall work this deliverance, as Kimchi and others F11 explain it; Christ delivered his people from all their spiritual enemies when he made peace for them; and he will deliver them in the latter day from both Pope and Turk, when he will destroy the man of sin by the breath of his mouth, and dry up the river Euphrates, and cast both beast and false prophet into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; though all that is said in this verse and (Micah 5:5) may have had its accomplishment already, at least in part, in the Saracens and their empire, which begun in the year 623, and who prevailed very much in Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and Africa, and even penetrated into Spain and France, in all which places were Christian churches; and so may be called “our land”, as the churches therein “our palaces”, which these people entered into, trod upon, profaned, or destroyed; and the seven or eight principal men

raised against them may be the Christian princes that fought with them, and drove them back, and destroyed their land; such as Hugh the great, brother to Philip king of France; Robert earl of Flanders; Robert earl of Normandy, brother to William the Conqueror, king of England; Stephen earl of Blois; Raymund earl of Tholouse; Godfrey duke of Lorraine, and his brothers Baldwin and Eustachius, and others. These beginning at Nice, where once a famous Christian council was held, and driving the army of Solymán from thence, in the space of our years subdued many provinces of Asia, Lycaonia, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Comagena; and at length having put to flight the Turks, and ejected the Saracens, took Jerusalem, and made Godfrey of Bulleín king of it F12. Some F13 have interpreted it of the emperor of Germany, and the seven electors in the empire (for formerly they were no more), happily and with success carrying on a war against the Turks, Tartars, and Saracens, when they broke into Europe; but the former sense seems better; and it is best of all to understand the prophecy of the destruction of the Turk or Ottoman empire in the latter day by the Christian princes.

FOOTNOTES:

F5 (וּרְיָ) “et depascent”, Montanus, Drusius; “pascent”, Piscator, Grotius, Cocceius.

F6 Phaleg. 1. 1. c. 2. col. 12.

F7 Vatablus, Junius and Tremellius, Bochart, Cocceius, and others.

F8 Bochart, Phaleg. 1. 4. c. 12. c. 229. Bedford’s Chronology, p. 773.

F9 (hyxtpb) “gladiis suis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 31. 2.

F11 R. Isaac, ib. p. 283. Abarbinel

F12 Vid. Witsii Exercitat. 8. de Assyriis in Miscel. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 218, 219, 220.

F13 Vid. Gurtler. Voc. Typic. Prophetic. Explicat. p. 18.

Micah 5:7

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people,

&c.] The Jews, who will be converted in the latter day, the remnant of them according to the election of grace, as well as all true Israelites, whether Jews or Gentiles, the Lord’s chosen and peculiar people; who, though but a small number in comparison of others, and mean and contemptible in the eyes of men, are such as God has made a reserve of for himself; and these, though not of the world, yet are in the world, and will be in the several parts

of it, but a distinct people from it, and of no account in it; nevertheless will be visible in it, and wonderfully preserved in the midst of it:

and will be as a dew from the Lord;

both with respect to themselves, being like to dew for the generation of it, which is from above, from heaven, and of God, as their regeneration is; and which secretly and silently falls as the grace of God in regeneration does; and for the number of the drops of it, which are not to be reckoned; and so numerous are the people of God, at least they will be in the latter day, when Christ shall again have the dew of his youth; or such a number of converts, as will be like the drops of the morning dew; as also for the favour, grace, and blessings of God upon them, which are as the dew; and which he himself is as that unto them, so that they themselves are as dew from him, being indulged with his favour; which, as the dew is entirely free, very softening, cooling, and refreshing, as well as fructifying; and having the dews of his grace, or the blessings of it, falling upon them in plenty; see (Hosea 14:5 Hosea 14:6) ; and with respect to others, among whom they are, and to whom they are as the dew, by their speech, their doctrine, the word ministered by them}, which distils like the dew, (Deuteronomy 32:26) ; and by their good works, which are profitable unto men; and by their soft and gentle behaviour towards them; and by reason of the many outward blessings they enjoy through them, as Laban did for the sake of Jacob, and Potiphar on the account of Josiah:

as the showers upon the grass;

which revive, refresh it, and cause it to grow and flourish; or they are like grass, on which the showers fall, and grow up as such in great numbers, and with great verdure and fruitfulness, (Psalms 72:16) ;

that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men;

which seems to be connected with the dew, though it agrees with both dew and rain, which stay not for men's desires or deserts, but descend according to the will of God: and as this regards the people of God, either with respect to themselves; it shows that as they are, as the dew, or as showers and clouds full of rain, either of grace or doctrine compared thereunto; they are not of themselves so, or of men, but of God; and that their dependence is not upon the creature, but upon the Lord for support and supply: , and with respect to others, to whom they are beneficial by their doctrine and works; that it is all from the Lord, and owing to his goodness, which makes them a blessing round about unasked and undeserved; see (Ezekiel 34:26) . It may have respect to plenty of Gospel ministers, whose doctrine is as the dew; and which, being attended with the power and Spirit of God, waits not for anything in man, but operates at once secretly and

powerfully.

Micah 5:8

And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people

The same persons are meant here as before; who are compared to dew and showers of rain, because numerous; and full of blessings in themselves, and useful and beneficial to others: and here are said to be

as a lion among the beasts of the forest;

strong, mighty, powerful, and courageous, and superior to their enemies, as the lion is strongest among beasts, and keeps all others in awe of him. Some refer this to the times of the Maccabees; when Judas and his brethren behaved with great fortitude and courage, and were victorious, and prevailed over the armies of Antiochus, and others; but it seems rather to belong to the latter day, when the Jews shall be superior to their enemies the Turks, who would disturb them in the possession of their land: and shall be a terror to them,

as a young lion among the flocks of sheep;

signifying that their enemies shall be no more to them, and no more able to oppose them, than a flock of sheep are to a young lion, or they to resist him. The design of the metaphor is; not to signify the harmlessness and innocence of their enemies, but their weakness, and the strength and courage of them;

who, if he go through;

the flock: on whatsoever he seizes,

both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver;

brings it to the ground at once, tramples upon it, and tears it in pieces as its prey; and none in the flock, or to whom it belongs, can deliver out of his hand. This will be the case when the Jews shall turn to the Lord, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall be at the head of them; though some interpret this of the first times of the Gospel, and take it to be fulfilled in the apostles and first ministers of the word, who were Jews; and who were valiant defenders of truth, and conquerors over the devil and the world, and were the instruments of bringing many into subjection to Christ; but it seems best to apply it to the last times, and not to the converted Jews only, though in the first place; but to all the, spiritual Israel of God, the whole Christian church, which will then be in such happy circumstances.

Micah 5:9**Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries**

O remnant of Jacob or Israel, as the Targum; the church of God; now will be the time that it shall prevail over all the antichristian states; now will the Christian princes pour out the vials of God's wrath upon them; and they shall feel the strength and weight of their hand; which will fall heavy upon them, even to their utter destruction: or thine hand, O Messiah, the ruler in Israel, the man the peace that shall deliver from the Assyrian; and who will be at the head of his church and people, the remnant of Jacob, and destroy their enemies with the sword that proceeds out of his mouth: and all thine enemies shall be cut off;

all the enemies of Christ and his church; all the kings of the earth that shall gather against them, the beast and false prophet, with all their followers; see (Revelation 19:19 Revelation 19:20) .

Micah 5:10**And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord**

When the above things shall be accomplished, even in the Gospel day, made so by the rising of the sun of righteousness; the Gospel dispensation, the latter part of it:

that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots;

which some take to be an apostrophe to literal Babylon, and to be fulfilled when Cyrus took possession of it; but rather it respects mystical Babylon, and the destruction of that by Christ; but it is best of all to interpret it of the church of Christ, all whose carnal confidences and dependences shall be cut off, and shall trust alone in Christ for salvation; particularly the Jews now converted, who have been used to put their trust in the flesh, and in such things as are here mentioned; but now shall be made to see the folly and vanity of such things, and shall renounce and disclaim them; see (Hosea 14:3) ; or the sense is, there shall be no more war; horses and chariots shall be no more used in a hostile way; but there shall be perfect peace, all enemies being destroyed, which agrees with (Micah 2:3) (Zechariah 9:10) . The Targum is,

“I will cut off the horses of the people from the midst of thee, and destroy their chariots?”

Micah 5:11

And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds.

] The meaning is, they should not dwell in fortified cities and walled towns; they should have none of these to trust to, nor should they stand in any need of them to defend them, their enemies being subdued; and besides, the Lord would be their strong hold and place of defence, a wall of fire round about them, but the glory in the midst of them, The phrases are expressive of the greatest tranquillity and safety, and of living in an open air, free and undisturbed; see (Zechariah 2:4 Zechariah 2:5) . The Targum is,

“I will cut off the cities of the people out of thy land, and destroy all their strong fortresses;”

these shall dwell no more there, and be no more offensive and troublesome.

Micah 5:12

And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand

Such as were formerly practised among the Jews, though forbidden them, and in mystical Babylon, or the antichristian church, whose sorceries are mentioned, (Revelation 9:21) (18:23) ; but nothing of this kind will be found in the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day; all unlawful arts, cheating and juggling in religious matters, will cease, **and be no more: and thou shalt have no [more] soothsayers;**

or diviners, that cast a mist over people’s eyes, and deceived them with false appearances of things; that pretended to know times and seasons, when it was or was not a good day to go abroad, or to make merchandise; that judged by the clouds, and by the position of the heavens, what would come to pass hereafter; and though such sort of men were formerly indulged, connived at, and caressed among the Jews, they should be so no more; nor should they apply to such persons for advice and counsel; nor would they need it, nor should they use it; see (Deuteronomy 18:10 Deuteronomy 18:11) .

Micah 5:13

Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the

midst of thee

The former were such as were made of wood or stone; the latter statues, such as were molten or cast, and made of gold, silver, or brass; Such as the Jews sometimes worshipped, and are now found in the apostate church of Rome; but will have no place in the Christian churches, or those so called, in the latter day. The Jews indeed have had no idols or idolatrous worship among them since the Babylonish captivity; and the prophet here speaks, not of what would be found among them, and removed at their conversion; but of what was in his time, or had been, or would be again, but should not be in future time, when they should turn to the Lord, and be like dew among the people; and so we are to understand some following passages. The Targum is,

``I will cut off the images of the people, and their statues:”

and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands;

as not to fall down to idols and worship them, so neither to trust in carnal privileges, ceremonial rites, observances of the traditions of the elders, or any works of righteousness done by them, which they had been prone unto.

Micah 5:14

And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee

Planted for idolatrous worship, and which the Jews in the reigns of some of their kings raised, and made use of for such purposes; see (1 Kings 15:13) (16:33) (18:19) ; though contrary to the law of God, (Deuteronomy 16:21) ; but now there should be nothing of this kind, all idolatry being rooted out of the world. The Targum is,

``I will root out the plantations of the people out of the midst of thee:”

so will I destroy thy cities;

which some understand of cities given to idolatry; or rather it is to be understood in the same sense as in (Micah 5:11) ; though by reason of that, and as something distinct from it, it is better to render the words with the Targum,

``I will destroy thine enemies F14.”

FOOTNOTES:

F14 So Jarchi, and Marinas in Aben Ezra, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 102. 1.

Micah 5:15**And I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury upon the Heathen**

Or “nations” F15; not the Pagan nations only, but the Papal and Mahometan ones, even all that are enemies to Christ, and his church and people: such as they have not heard;

such terrible judgments, and dreadful expressions of divine wrath and fury, by earthquakes, hailstones as were never known or heard of in the world before; see (Revelation 16:18-21) ; or, “which have not heard” F16; the people that have not heard and hearkened to the word of God, to the voice of Christ in the Gospel, but have turned a deaf ear to it, and despised it. So the Targum,

“`who have not received the doctrine of the law;”

but it is much more agreeable to understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel disobeyed by men, and therefore justly punished; see (2 Thessalonians 1:8 2 Thessalonians 1:9) .

FOOTNOTES:

F15 (את הגוים) “gentes”, Junius & Tremellius.

F16 (אשר לא שמעו) “quae non audierunt”, Pagninus, Montanus; “quae non auscultaverint”, Junius & Tremellius; “quae non obediverunt”, Burkius.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 6

This chapter contains reproofs of the people of Israel for their sins, threatening them with punishment for them. The prophet is bid to tell them of the controversy the Lord had with them, which he did, Mic 6:1,2; and the Lord calls upon them to declare if they had any thing to object to his attitude towards them, Mic 6:3; and then puts them in mind of the favours they had received from him, in bringing them out of Egypt, and giving them such useful persons to go before them, lead and instruct them, as he had, Mic

6:4; and also reminds them of what passed between Balak, king of Moab, and Balaam the soothsayer; the questions of the one, and the answer of the other; whereby the designs of the former against them were frustrated, Mic 6:5-8; but since the voice of the Lord by his prophet was disregarded by them, they are called upon to hearken to the voice of his rod, Mic 6:9; which should be laid upon them for their fraudulent dealings, injustice, oppression, lies, and deceit, Mic 6:10-12; and therefore are threatened with sickness and desolation, and a deprivation of all good things, the fruit of their labours, Mic 6:13-15; and that because the statutes of Omri, the works of Ahab, and their counsels, were observed by them, Mic 6:16.

Micah 6:1

Hear ye now what the Lord saith

Here begins a new discourse, and with an address of the prophet to the people of Israel, to hear what the Lord had to say to them by way of reproof for their sins now, as they had heard before many great and precious promises concerning the Messiah, and the happiness of the church in future time; to hear what the Lord now said to them by the prophet, and what he said to the prophet himself, as follows:

arise;

O Prophet Micah, and do thine office; sit not still, nor indulge to sloth and ease; show readiness, diligence, activity, zeal, and courage in my service, and in carrying a message from me to my people:

contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice;

open the cause depending between me and my people; state the case between us before the mountains and hills; and exert thyself, and lift up thy voice loudly, and with so much vehemence, that, if it was possible, the very mountains and hills might hear thee; the Lord hereby suggests that they would as soon hear as his people; thus upbraiding their stupidity, as he elsewhere does; see (Isaiah 1:2) (Jeremiah 2:12) (22:29) . Kimchi and Ben Melech render it, to the mountains, which is much to the same sense with our version; call and summon them as witnesses in this cause; let the pleadings be made before them, and let them be judges in this matter; as they might be both for God, and against his people: the mountains and hills clothed with grass, and covered with flocks and herds; or set with all manner of fruit trees, vines, olives, and figs; or adorned with goodly cedars, oaks, and elms; were witnesses of the goodness of God unto them, and the same could testify against them; and, had they mouths to speak, could declare the abominations committed on them; how upon every high mountain and hill, and under every green tree, they had been guilty of idolatry. The Targum,

and many versions {q}, render it, “with the mountains”; and the Vulgate Latin version, and others, “against the mountains” F18; the inhabitants of Judea, that being a mountainous country, especially some parts of it. Some by “mountains” understand the great men of the land, king, princes, nobles; and, by “hills”, lesser magistrates, with whom the Lord’s controversy chiefly was; they not discharging their offices aright, nor setting good examples to the people. Some copies of the Targum, as the king of Spain’s Bible, paraphrase it,

“judge or contend with the fathers, and let the mothers hear thy voice;”

which Kimchi thus explains, as if it was said, let the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, hear what their children hath rendered to the Lord; let them be, as it were, called out of their graves to hear the ill requital made to the Lord for all his goodness.

FOOTNOTES:

F17 (את ההרים) “cum istis montiibus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius; “cum montibus”, Montanus, Munster, Cocceius, Burkius.

F18 “Adversum montes”, V. L. Grotius.

Micah 6:2

Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord’s controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth

These are the words of the prophet, obeying the divine command, calling upon the mountains, which are the strong parts of the earth, and the bottoms of them the foundations of it, to hear the Lord’s controversy with his people, and judge between them; or, as some think, these are the persons with whom, and against whom, the controversy was; the chief and principal men of the land, who were as pillars to the common people to support and uphold them:

for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel;

his people Israel, who were so by choice, by covenant, by their own avouchment and profession: they had been guilty of many sins and transgressions against both tables of the law; and now the Lord had a controversy with them for them, and was determined to enter into judgment,

and litigate the point with them; and dreadful it is when God brings in a charge, and pleads his own cause with sinful men; they are not able to contend with him, nor answer him for one of a thousand faults committed against him; see (Hosea 4:1 Hosea 4:2) .

Micah 6:3

O my people

These are the words of the Lord himself by the prophet, expressing his strong affection to the people of Israel, of which his goodness to them was a full proof, and this was an aggravation of their ingratitude to him; they were his people, whom he had chosen for himself above all people of the earth; whom he had redeemed from the house of bondage, had distinguished them by his layouts, and loaded them with his benefits, and yet they sinned against him: what have I done unto thee?

what evil things, what injuries to provoke to such usage? “what iniquity have you”, or “your fathers, found in me”, to treat me after this manner? have I been “a wilderness”, or “a land of darkness”, to you? (Jeremiah 2:5 Jeremiah 2:31) ; have I withheld or denied you anything that was for your good? The Targum is,

“O my people, what good have I said I would do unto thee, and I have not done it?”

all that the Lord had promised he had performed; not one good thing had failed he had spoken of; how much good, and how many good things, had he done for them? nay, what good things were there he had not done for them? and what more could be done for them than what had been done? and yet they sinned against him so grossly; see (Isaiah 5:4) ; and wherein have I wearied thee?

what heavy yoke have I put upon thee? what grievous commandments have I enjoined thee? is there anything in my service, any duty, too hard, severe, or unreasonable? are the sacrifices required burdensome? “have I caused thee to serve with an offering, and wearied thee with incense?” is there any just reason to say of these things, “what a weariness is it?” See (Isaiah 43:23) (Malachi 1:13) ; testify against me;

declare it publicly, if any good thing has been wanting, or any evil thing done: thus the Lord condescends to have the case fairly debated, and everything said that could be said in their favour, or against him: astonishing condescension and goodness!

Micah 6:4**For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt**

Instead of doing them any wrong, he had done them much good; of which this is one instance, and he was able to produce more: this a notorious, plain, and full proof of his goodness to them, which could not be denied. It may be rendered, as it is by some, “surely I brought thee up” F19 this is a certain thing, well known, and cannot be disproved; it must be allowed to be a great favour and kindness to be brought up out of a superstitious, idolatrous, Heathenish people, enemies to God and true religion, and who had used them in a barbarous and cruel manner:

and redeemed thee out of the house of servants;

or, “out of the house of bondage”; as the same words are rendered, (Exodus 20:2) ; that is, out of hard service, in which their lives were made bitter; out of cruel bondage and slavery; which made them cry to the Lord for help and deliverance, and he heard them, and sent them a deliverer; by whose hand he redeemed them from this base and low estate in which they were, and for which they ought ever to have been thankful, and to have shown their gratitude by their cheerful and constant obedience. Some take “the house of servants” to be descriptive, not of the state of the children of Israel in Egypt, but of the character of the Egyptians themselves; who, being the posterity of Ham, were inheritors of his curse, that he should be a servant of servants; and so it is an aggravation of the blessing, that Israel were redeemed from being servants to the servants of servants. This sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Abarbinel:

and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam;

not to bring them the news of their deliverance out of Egypt, before they came out of it, as Kimchi; but to be their guides to conduct and direct them in all matters, civil and religious. Moses was their lawgiver, leader, and commander; Aaron was their priest to offer sacrifice for them, and to intercede on their behalf; and Miriam was a prophetess; and they were all very useful and beneficial to them; and a very great blessing it is to a people to have a good constitution, civil and ecclesiastic, and to have good magistrates, and good ministers of the word. The Targum is,

“I sent before thee three prophets, Moses to teach the tradition of the judgments, Aaron to make atonement for the people, and Miriam to instruct the women.”

FOOTNOTES:

F19 (כ) “certe”, Calvin, Piscator, Tarnovius; so some in Vatablus.

Micah 6:5**O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted,**

&c.] What a scheme he had laid; what contrivances he had formed; what consultations he had with a soothsayer or diviner he sent for to curse Israel; how he sought to get the God of Israel on his side, and to set him against them, that he might be rid of them, and they be ruined and destroyed. The Moabites were the descendants of Moab, a son of Lot, by one of his daughters; when they first set up their kingdom is not certain; nor who their kings in succession were before Balak: it appears there was a former king, whom the king of the Amorites fought with, and took away his land from him, (Numbers 21:26) ; who probably was Zippor, the father of Balak, and whom he succeeded; the kingdom being recovered by him, or by this his son; however, he was on the throne when Israel was upon the borders of his kingdom, which threw him into a panic; upon which he sent messengers to a neighbouring magician next mentioned, to advise with him what to do in this his extremity; and the Jews have a tradition, that, because of the multitude of sacrifices he offered, he was worthy to have Ruth, the descendant from him; who, they say, was the daughter of Eglon, the grandson of Balak, king of Moab {s}:

and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him;

this man is called a soothsayer, (Joshua 13:22) ; The Jews say he was first a prophet; and so the Apostle Peter calls him, (2 Peter 2:16) ; and afterwards became a diviner {t}: they differ very much about him, who he was, and from whom he descended. Beor his father is sometimes said to be the son of Laban {u}; and, at other times, Balaam himself is said to be Laban the Syrian {w}, whose soul they suppose transmigrated into Balaam, as it afterwards did into Nabal, according to them. Some F24 take him to be the same with Elihu, who interposed in the dispute between Job and his friends; and others say that he was one of the eunuchs, counsellors, and magicians of Pharaoh, both when Moses was a child, and when he wrought his miracles in Egypt; and that Jannes and Jambres, of whom the Apostle Paul makes mention, (2 Timothy 3:8) ; were his two sons F25: he was an inhabitant of Pethor, which was situated on the river Euphrates, thought by Junius to be the Pacoria of Ptolemy: he seems to have been a Mesopotamian, though some say a Midianite; but, whether one or the other,

he did not live at any great distance from the king of Moab: he was slain by the sword the children of Israel, in the times of Joshua, (Joshua 13:22) ; and, as the Jews say F26 he was, when he was but thirty three or thirty four years of age; they observing upon it, that bloody and deceitful men do not live out, half their days; but this does not seem so well to agree with other things they say of him; however, this soothsayer and sorcerer Balak sent for to curse Israel; whose heart and tongue, though a wicked man, and would fain have done according to Balak's wish and desire, were so overruled by the power of God, that instead of cursing Israel he was obliged to bless them, and to prophesy of their future happiness and prosperity, and of the Messiah, that should spring from them; see history of all this in (Numbers 22:1-24:25) ;

from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord;

here something must be supplied to make sense of the words; either, "remember what good things I did for you F1, from Shittim to Gilgal"; the former was the place where the children of Israel committed whoredom and idolatry, and was on the other side Jordan; and the latter was the place they came to when they had passed over Jordan, where the covenant of circumcision was renewed, and the first passover kept; now they are called upon to remember the goodness of God unto them from one place to another, and what were done between them; how that at Shittim, though they provoked the Lord to anger, yet he did not cut them all off, but spared a number of them, to enter and possess the land of Canaan; and though Moses died by the way, yet he raised up Joshua to go before them, and in a miraculous manner led them through the river Jordan, and brought them to Gilgal--favours ever to he had in remembrance. So the Targum,

``were not great things done for you in the plain of Shittim unto the house of Gilgal, that the righteousness of the Lord might be known?"

both his justice in punishing offenders at Shittim, and his bounty and kindness, as well as his truth and faithfulness, in sparing others; bestowing his favours on them, and bringing them into the promised land: or it may be supplied thus, as by some, "remember what Balak consulted F2 from Shittim to Gilgal"; that is, with Balaam, and what answer and advice he gave him; which was to send beautiful women among the Israelites, and so tempt them to adultery, and by that means to idolatry; and which scheme and consultation took place at Shittim, by means of which several thousands

were slain; and the device was to have continued the temptation even to Gilgal, which, had it not been prevented, in all likelihood would have issued in the destruction of that people; and therefore they had reason to know, own, and acknowledge the goodness and faithfulness of God unto them: or rather, taking the phrase “from Shittim to Gilgal” to be a proverbial one F3, of going from place to place, it may have respect to Balak’s having Balaam from place to place, to take a view of the people, and curse them; or how he might set the God of Israel against them, and gain him over to him; and then the sense is this,

` ` remember how Balak consulted Balaam from place to place, and what answers he returned him; all which was done, that “he (Balak) might know the righteousness of the Lord;”

and so the Syriac version renders it, and it will bear to be so rendered: the thing which Balak chiefly consulted was, how he should get the God of Israel on his side; as it was usual with Heathen princes, when at war, to attempt to get the gods of their enemies from them, and on their side; and inquires of Balaam how this was to be effected; what righteousness it was the Lord required; what duties of religion to be performed; what rites or sacrifices were acceptable to him; and the sum of his questions on this head, and Balaam’s answer to them, are contained in the following verses.

FOOTNOTES:

F19 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 2.

F20 Ib. fol. 106. 1.

F21 Shalsholet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1.

F23 Targum Jon. in Numb. xxii. 5. Targum in 1 Chron. i. 44. Vid.

Burkium ib.

F24 Hieron. Quaeat. Hebr. in Genesim, fol. 69. D.

F25 Dibre Hayamim Shel Moseh, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 2. Targum Jon. in Exod. ix. 21. Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 90. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106.

F26 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. Shalsholet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

F1 “Recordare qualia bona exhibuerim tibi”, Munster; “memento eorum quae gesta sunt”, Vatablus; “quae contigerint tibi”, Calvin; “memento eorum quae fecerim”, Grotius; “recordare quid evenerit tibi”, Piscator.

F2 “Memento quid cogifaverit contra te Balac, et quid responderit ei Balaam a Settim” Ribera; so Menochius, Tirinus.

F3 See Bishop Chandler’s Defence of Christianity, p. 290.

Micah 6:6

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord

These are not the words of the people of Israel God had a controversy with, and now made sensible of their sin, and humbled for it; and willing to appease the Lord, and make it up with him at any rate; for there are such things proposed by them as do by no means suit with persons of such a character, nay, even suppose them to be hypocritical; and much less are they what were put into their mouths by the prophet to say, as some suggest; but they are the words of Balak king of Moab, which, and what follow, are questions he put to Balaam, who had told him that he could do nothing without the Lord, nor anything contrary to his word: now he asks what he must do to get the good will of this Lord; in what manner, and with what he must appear before him, serve and worship him, as the Targum; that so he might have an interest in him, and get him to speak a word to Balaam in his favour, and against Israel; see (Numbers 22:8 Numbers 22:18 Numbers 22:38) (Numbers 23:12 Numbers 23:15 Numbers 23:26) ;

[and] bow myself before the high God?

the most high God, the God of gods, whose Shechinah or Majesty is in the high heavens, as the Targum: his meaning is, with what he should come, or bring with him, when he paid his homage and obeisance to him, by bowing his body or his knee before him; being willing to do it in the most acceptable manner he could: shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year

old?

such as he had been used to offer on the high places of Baal to that deity. Sacrifices of this kind prevailed among the Heathens, which they had received by tradition from the times of Adam and Noah; see (Numbers 22:41) .

Micah 6:7

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams

If single burnt offerings of bullocks and heifers will not do, will rams, and thousands of them, be acceptable to him? if they will, they are at his service, even as many as he pleases; such creatures, as well as oxen, were offered by Balak, (Numbers 23:1 Numbers 23:2 Numbers 23:4 Numbers 23:29 Numbers 23:30) ;

[or] with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

for meat offerings, as Jarchi, in which oil was used: this is a hyperbolic expression, as Kimchi rightly observes; suggesting that he was willing to be at any expenses, even the most extravagant, if he could but gain his point, and get the God of Israel on his side. Some render it, “ten thousands of fat valleys” F4; abounding with corn, and wine, and oil; the produce of which, had he so many, he could freely part with, could he but obtain his end; see (Job 20:17) ;

shall I give my firstborn [for] my transgression, the fruit of my body [for] the sin of my soul?

his Son, his firstborn, his own flesh and blood, to make atonement for his sins and transgressions; this betrays the person speaking. The people of Israel, though they were sometimes guilty of this horrid, unnatural, and abominable sin, in the height of their degeneracy and apostasy, as to sacrifice their children to Moloch; yet when convinced of their sins, and humbling themselves before God for them, even though but in a hypocritical way, could never be so weak and foolish, so impious and audacious, as to propose that to God, which they knew was so contrary to his will, and so abominable in his sight, (Leviticus 18:21) ; but this comes well enough from a Heathen prince, with whom it was the, height of his devotion and religion, and the greatest sacrifice he thought he could offer up to God; for there is a climax, a gradation in the words from lesser things to greater; and this is the greatest of all, and what was done among the Heathens, (2 Kings 17:31) ; and was afterwards done by a king of Moab, (2 Kings 3:26 2 Kings 3:27) .

FOOTNOTES:

F4 (ברבבות נחלי שמן) “in decem millibus vallium pinguium”, Munster.

Micah 6:8

He hath showed me, O man, what [is] good

This is not the answer of the prophet to the body of the people, or to any and every one of the people of Israel; but of Balaam to Balak, a single man, that consulted with him, and put questions to him; particularly what he should do to please the Lord, and what righteousness he required of him, that would be acceptable to him; and though he was a king, he was but a man, and he would have him know it that he was no more, and as such addresses him; and especially when he is informing him of his duty to God; which lay not in such things as he had proposed, but in doing that

which was good, and avoiding that which was evil, in a moral sense: and this the Lord had shown him by the light of nature; which is no other than the work of the law of God written in the hearts of the Heathens, by which they are directed to do the good commanded in the law, and to shun the evil forbidden by it; see (Romans 2:14 Romans 2:15) ;

and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly;

or “judgment” {e}; to exercise public judgment and justice, as a king, among his subjects; to do private and personal justice between man and man; to hurt no man’s person, property, and character; to give to everyone their due, and do as he would desire to be done by; which as it is agreeable to the law of God, so to the light of nature, and what is shown, required, and taught by it:

and to love mercy;

not only to show mercy to miserable objects, to persons in distress; to relieve the poor and indigent; to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry; but to delight in such exercises; and which a king especially should do, whose throne is established by mercy, and who is able, and should be munificent; and some Heathen princes, by their liberality, have gained the name of benefactors, “Euergetes”, as one of the Ptolemies did; see (Luke 22:25) ; such advice Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar, a Heathen prince, as agreeable to the light of nature; see (Daniel 4:27) ;

and to walk humbly with thy God?

his Creator and Benefactor, from whom he had his being, and all the blessings of life, and was dependent upon him; and therefore, as a creature, should behave with humility towards his Creator, acknowledging his distance from him, and the obligations he lay under to him; and even though a king, yet his God and Creator was above him, King of kings, and Lord of lords, to whom he owed his crown, sceptre, and kingdom, and was accountable to him for all his administrations: and this “walking humbly” is opposed to “walking in pride”, which kings are apt to do; but God can humble them, and bring them low, as Heathen kings have been obliged to own; see (Daniel 2:21) (4:37) .

FOOTNOTES:

F5 מִשְׁפָּט “judicium”, V. L. Munster; “jus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Micah 6:9

The Lord's voice crieth unto the city

The Lord having bid his prophet call to the mountains and hills to hear his voice, and the prophet having obeyed his will, and the Lord having by him addressed his people Israel, and expostulated with them about their ingratitude, observing to them many instances of his goodness; here informs them, that this voice of his, whether in his prophet, or in his judgments, was directed to the city, either Samaria or Jerusalem, or both, and even to all the cities of Israel and Judah, the singular being put for the plural; that is, to the inhabitants of them. Cities being populous, and where persons of the highest rank and figure, as well as of the best sense, dwell, and generally very wicked, though favoured with greater advantages; all which are reasons why the voice of the Lord, in his word and providences, particularly cries to them to repent of their sins, and reform from them, as might be expected from such persons; and so doing would set a good example to those who live in the country. Some render it, “the Lord's voice crieth to awake” F6; or to “stir up”; it calls upon men asleep to awake out of sleep; to arouse from their carnal security; to attend to their sins, their danger, and their duty; to repent of their sins, and so avoid the danger they were in through them, and perform their duty they had such a voice as this, see in (Ephesians 5:14) ; this reading of the words is mentioned by Kimchi;

and [the man of] wisdom shall see thy name;

not the mere natural man, or who is possessed only of natural wisdom, though he may have ever so great a share of it; for as he sees not the things of the Spirit of God, the things of the Gospel, so neither the name and perfections of God in his judgments on the earth; much less the man that is wise to do evil, full of wicked subtlety, and makes a jest of everything religious and serious; nor such as are wise in their own opinion, or have only a superficial share of wisdom; but such who have a share of solid and substantial wisdom, a man of “substance”, as the word F7 sometimes signifies; see (Proverbs 8:21) ; such who have true wisdom in the hidden part, that which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable, and makes men wise to salvation; such men see and discern the power and providence of God in all the judgments that are in the earth; his attributes and perfections; his severity on some, and goodness to others; his sparing grace and mercy, and his special lovingkindness, and even all his perfections, for he is known to such by the judgments he executeth; see (Psalms 9:16) (107:43) ; and such, “fear” his “name” also, as some render the words F8; they not only fear the Lord and his goodness, but have an awful sense of his judgments, and tremble at them. Some read the words, “thy name sees that which is” F9; so the margin of our Bibles; that is, the Lord seeth that which

is done in the city, though ever so secret and private, and therefore his voice cries to it;

hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it;

these are the words of the man of wisdom, as Kimchi observes; who, seeing the name and perfections of God in his judgments on the earth, upon others, and exhorts them to hear the voice rod, of the rod of correction and affliction, the rod of judgment and vengeance, as held in the hand of God, and shook over a city or nation; which has a voice in it to men, reproving them for their sins; commanding them to return from them; calling them to repentance and humiliation; teaching and instructing them in their duty; and giving cautions and warnings to others, lest the like should befall them; and this is the voice that is to be attended to: audit should be considered, that there is no affliction, calamity, or judgment, but is appointed by the Lord, the kind and nature, measure and duration, of it; what its end, issue, and use; and he that has appointed it is all wise and all knowing, unchangeable and invariable, all powerful, and able to put his purposes and decrees into execution; nor can they be frustrated. The Targum of the whole is,

“with the voice the prophets of the Lord Cry to the city; and teachers fear the name (of the Lord); hear, O king and rulers, and the rest of the people of the land.”

FOOTNOTES:

F6 (לִיר) “ad suscitandum”, Vatablus; “ad expergefaciendum”, Calvin; “ad excitandum”, Drusius. So Joseph Kimchi.

F7 (תושיה) “vir constans”, Pagninus; “vir essentilae”, Gualtherus apud Tarnovium.

F8 (יראה שמכ) “timebit nomen tuum”, Pagninus, Montanus. So the Targum.

F9 “Nam quod res est, videt nomen tuum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Micah 6:10

Are there yet the treasures of wickedness the house of the wicked?

&c.] There are; they continue there. This is the voice of the Lord by the prophet, and the language of the rod of correction to be heard, exposing the sins of the people, for which the Lord had a controversy with them; particularly their mammon of unrighteousness, the vast wealth, riches, and

treasures, collected together by very wicked and unlawful ways and means; and which, instead of restoring them to the persons they had defrauded of them, they retained them in their houses, notwithstanding the reproofs of the prophets, and the corrections of the Almighty. Some render it, “is there not fire?” &c. {k}; that is, in the house of the wicked, because of the treasures of wickedness, that which consumes them; but Gussetius F12 interprets it of fornications and adulteries. Others render it, “is there yet a man?” &c. F13; an honourable man, as Aben Ezra, who continues in his iniquity, after the Lord’s voice cries to the city; but Abendana interprets it of the prophet himself, continuing to reprove the wicked for their treasures of wickedness, and their other sins;

and the scant measure [that is] abominable?

or “the ephah of leanness provoking to wrath” F14; that is, a deficient measure, less than it should be; the “ephah” was a dry measure, and it was made small, as in (Amos 8:5) ; and held less than it should; and this brought leanness and poverty upon those to whom they sold by it, as well as ruin upon themselves in the issue; for such practices as they were abominable and detestable to God; they stirred up his wrath, and brought destruction on those that used them. The Targum is,

“false measures that bring a curse.”

FOOTNOTES:

F11 (וְדֵה אֵשׁ) (mh pur) , Sept. “adhuc ignis”, V. L. So Joseph Kimchi.

F12 Ebr. Comment. p. 352.

F13 “Adhuc num vir domo”, Montanus; “adhuc suntne viro domus improbi”, some in Drusius. So R. Sol. Urbin, fol. 37. 2.

F14 (וְאֵיפֶת רוּרְנֵי עֹמֶה) “et ephah macilentiae indignatio a Deo proventura”, Tarnovius; “detestatus Domino”, Pagninus; “et ephah maciei abominatione digna”, Burkius.

Micah 6:11

Shall I count [them] pure with the wicked balances

These are the words either of the prophet, or rather of God, signifying that he could not, and would not, allow, countenance, and approve of persons that used false scales or balances; or justify and reckon them just, as they would be thought to be, but condemn them, and pronounce them very wicked men, and deserving of punishment here and hereafter:

and with the bag of deceitful weights?

or “stones” F15; which were used in weighing goods, and which were deceitful, when a heavier was used in buying, and a lighter in selling. So the Targum,

“and with the bag, in which are weights greater and lesser;”

condemned in (Deuteronomy 25:13 Deuteronomy 25:14) .

FOOTNOTES:

F15 (אבני מרמה) “lapidum doli”, Piscator; “lapidum fraudis”, Montanus.

Micah 6:12**For the rich men thereof are full of violence**

That is, the rich men of the city, to whom the voice of the Lord cried, (Micah 6:9) . Jerusalem or Samaria, or any or all the cities of Israel and Judah; the rich men of these cities, who had enough of the world, and were under no temptation to do an ill thing, to get money; and yet their hands and their houses, and their treasuries, as the Targum, were full of goods gotten by violent measures, by the oppression of the poor and needy:

and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies;

the rest of the inhabitants, who were not so rich as others, and who had it not in the power of their hands to oppress as others had; yet used deceitful and fraudulent methods to cheat their neighbours in buying and selling; and, to do this, did not stick to tell downright deliberate lies:

and their tongue [is] deceitful in their mouth;

say one thing, and mean another; deceive their neighbours with their tongues in trade and commerce; averting things for truth they know to be false.

Micah 6:13**Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee**

With the rod to be heard, (Micah 6:9) ; by sending among them some of his sore judgments, as famine, pestilence, the sword of the enemy, internal wars, and the like; which should cause their kingdom, and state, and families, to decline and waste away, as a sickly and diseased body. So the

``and I brought upon thee illness and a stroke.”

The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “and I began to smite thee”; as by Hazael, king of Syria, and Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, who had carried part of them captive;

in making [thee] desolate because of thy sins;

went on, not only to make them sick, and bring them into a declining state, but into utter desolation; as by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried Israel captive; and by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who led Judah captive, because of their sins of idolatry, injustice, and oppression, with others that abounded among them.

Micah 6:14

Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied

Either not having enough to eat, for the refreshing and satisfying of nature; or else a blessing being withheld from food, though eaten, and so not nourishing; or a voracious and insatiable appetite being given as a curse; the first sense seems best: and thy casting down [shall be] in the midst of thee;

meaning they should be humbled and brought down, either by civil discords and wars among themselves, or through the enemy being suffered to come into the midst of their country, and make havoc there; which would be as a sickness and disease in their bowels. So the Targum,

``thou shalt have an illness in thy bowels.”

The Syriac version is,

``a dysentery shall be in thine intestines;”

a secret judgment wasting and destroying them; and thou shalt take hold, but shall not deliver; and [that] which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword;

the sense is, that they should take hold of their wives and children, and endeavour to save them from the sword of the enemy, and being carried captive: or should “remove” them F16, as the word is sometimes used, in order to secure them from them; or should “overtake” F17; the enemy, carrying them captive; but should not be able by either of these methods to

save them from being destroyed, or carried away by them; and even such as they should preserve or rescue for a while, yet these should be given up to the sword of the enemy, the same or another. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret this of their women conceiving, and not bringing forth; and, if they should, yet what they brought forth should be slain by the sword F18. But the Targum and Jarchi incline to the former sense.

FOOTNOTES:

F16 (אָמַוּבִּי) “et amovebis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius; “summovebis”, Drusius, so Ben Melech; “et removebis”, Burkius.

F17 “Assequeris”, Syr.

F18 R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 35. 2.

Micah 6:15

Thou shall sow, but thou shalt not reap

Either that which is sown shall not spring up, but rot in the earth; or if it does spring up, and come to maturity, yet, before that, they should be removed into captivity, or slain by the sword, and their enemies should reap the increase of their land, their wheat and their grain:

thou shall tread the olives;

in the olive press, to get out the oil: but thou shalt not anoint with oil; as at feasts for refreshment, and at baths for health, this becoming another's property; or, it being a time of distress and mourning, would not be used, it being chiefly at festivals, and occasions of joy, that oil was used:

and sweet wine;

that is, shalt tread the grapes in the winepress, to get out the sweet or new wine:

but shalt not drink wine;

for, before it is fit to drink, the enemy would have it in his possession; see (Leviticus 26:16) (Deuteronomy 28:30) ; these are the punishments or corrections of the rod they are threatened with for their sins.

Micah 6:16

For the statutes of Omri are kept

Who of a captain of the army was made king of Israel, and proved a wicked prince; he built Samaria, and set up idolatrous worship there, after the example of Jeroboam, in whose ways he walked, and, as it seems,

established the same by laws and edicts; and which were everyone of them observed by the Israelites, in the times of the prophet, though at the distance of many years from the first making of them, which aggravated their sin; nor would it be any excuse of them that what they practised was enjoined by royal authority, since it was contrary to the command of God; for the breach of which, and their observance of the statutes of such a wicked prince, they are threatened with the judgments of God; see (1 Kings 16:16 1 Kings 16:24-26) ;

and all the works of the house of Ahab;

who was the son of Omri, and introduced the worship of Baal, and added to the idolatry of the calves, which he and his family practised; and the same works were now done by the people of Israel:

and ye walk in their counsels;

as they advised and directed the people to do in their days:

that I should make thee a desolation;

the city of Samaria, the metropolis of Israel, or the whole land, which was made a desolation by Shalmaneser, an instrument in the hand of God; and this was not the intention and design of their walking in the counsels and after the example of their idolatrous kings, but the consequence and event of so doing: and the inhabitants thereof an hissing;

either of Samaria, or of all the land, who should become the scorn and derision of men, when brought to ruin for their sins:

therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people;

that which was threatened in the law to the people of God, when disobedient to him; or shameful punishment for profaning the name and character of the people of God they bore; or for reproaching and ill using the poor among the people of God; and so it is directed to the rich men before spoken of, and signifies the shame and ignominy they should bear, by being carried captive into a foreign land for their sins.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 7

This chapter begins with a lamentation of the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, concerning the general depravity and corruption of the times in which he lived, Mic 7:1-6; then declares what he was determined to do for his relief in such circumstances, Mic 7:7; comforts himself and the church with a good hope and firm belief of its being otherwise and better with them, to the shame and confusion of their enemies that now rejoiced, though without just reason for it, Mic 7:8-10; with promises of deliverance, after a desolation of the land for some time,

Mic 7:11-13; and with the answer returned to the prayers of the prophet, Mic 7:14,15; which would issue in the astonishment of the world, and their subjection to the church of God, Mic 7:16,17; and the chapter is concluded with admiration at the pardoning grace and mercy of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, Mic 7:18-20.

Micah 7:1

Woe is me!

&c.] Alas for me unhappy man that I am, to live in such an age, and among such a people, as I do! this the prophet says in his own name, or in the name of the church and people of God in his time; so Isaiah, who was contemporary with him, (Isaiah 6:5) ; see also (Psalms 120:5 Psalms 120:6) ;

for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage;

when there are only an apple or a pear or two, or such sort of fruit, and such a quantity of it left on the top of the tree, or on the outermost branches of it, after the rest are gathered in; or a few single grapes here and there, after the vintage is over; signifying either that he was like Elijah left alone, or however that the number of good men were very few; or that there were very few gathered in by his ministry, converted, taught, and instructed by it; or those that had the name of good men were but very indifferent, and not like those who were in times past; but were as refuse fruit left on trees, and dropped from thence when rotten, and when gathered up were good for little, and like single grapes, small and withered, and of no value; see (Isaiah 17:6) ;

[there is] no cluster to eat;

no large number or society of good men to converse with, only here and there a single person; and none that have an abundance of grace and goodness in them, and a large experience of spiritual and divine things; few that attend the ministry of the word; they do not come in clusters, in crowds; and fewer still that receive any advantage by it;

my soul desired the first ripe fruit;

the company and conversation of such good men as lived in former times; who had the firstfruits of the Spirit, and arrived to a maturity of grace, and a lively exercise of it; and who were, in the age of the prophet, as scarce and rare as first ripe fruits, and as desirable as such were to a thirsty traveller; see (Hosea 9:10) . The Targum is,

“the prophet said, woe unto me, because I am as when good men fail, in a time in which merciful men perish from the earth; behold, as the summer fruits, as the gleanings after the vintage, there is no man in whom there are good works; my soul desires good men.”

Micah 7:2

The good [man] is perished out of the earth

Here the prophet expresses in plain words what he had before delivered in figurative terms. The “good” or “godly” man, as in (Psalms 12:1) ; is one that has received the grace of God, and blessings of grace from him, and lives a godly life and conversation; who has the good work of grace begun in him and is found in the performance of good works, and does his duty both to God and man from godly principles; and particularly is kind and merciful to the poor and needy, and those in distress. The complaint is, that there were few, or scarce any, of this character in the earth, in the land of Israel, where there used to be great numbers of them, but now they were all dead and gone; for this is to be understood, not of the perishing of their graces or comforts, much less of their perishing in their sins, or perishing eternally, but of their corporeal death:

and [there is] none upright among men;

that are upright in heart and life; that have right spirits renewed in them, are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; and walk uprightly, according to the rule of the divine word, truly honest, faithful men; very few such were to be found, scarce any; see (Psalms 12:1) (Isaiah 57:1) ; they all lie in wait for blood;

for the substance, wealth, and riches of men, which is as their blood and life; is their livelihood, that on which they live; this they wait for an opportunity to get from them, and, when it offers, greedily seize it; and stick not even to shed blood, and take away life, for the sake of gain: they hunt every man his brother with a net;

as men lay nets for fish, and fowl, and beasts, and hunt them till they have got them into them; so these men laid snares, not for strangers only, but for their own brethren, to entangle them in, and cheat and defraud them of their substance; and this they would do, even to the destruction of them, as some F19 render it; for the word also signifies “anathema”, destruction, as well as a “net”. So the Targum.

“betray or deliver his brother to destruction.”

FOOTNOTES:

F19 (חרם) “ad necem”, Tigurine version; “anathema, caedes”, Drusius; “ad occasuinem”, ibid. Micah 7:3

Micah 7:3**That they may do evil with both hands earnestly**

Or “well” {ט}, strenuously, diligently, to the utmost of their power, labouring at it with all their might and main; as wicked men generally are more industrious, and exert themselves more to do evil than good men do to do good; and even weary themselves to commit iniquity: or, “instead of doing good”, as Marinus in Aben Ezra, take a great deal of pains to do evil; work with both hands at it, instead of doing good. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “they prepare their hands for evil”; the Syriac version is, “their hands are read? to evil, and they do not do good”; with which agrees the Targum,

“they do evil with their hands, and do not do good.”

Some make the sense to depend on what goes before and follows; “to do evil, both hands” are open and ready, and they hurt with them; “but to do, good the prince asketh, and the judge for a reward” F21; forward enough to do evil, but very backward to do any good office;

the prince asketh, and the judge [asketh] for a reward;

and, if they do it, must be bribed, and have a reward for it, even persons of such high character; but this sense is not favoured by, the accents; besides, by what follows, it seems as if the “prince”, by whom may be meant the king upon the throne, and the “judge” he that sits upon the bench under him, sought for bribes to do an ill thing; to give a cause wrong against a poor man, and in favour of a rich man that will bribe high:

and the great [man] he uttereth his mischievous desire;

the depravity, corruption, and perverseness of his soul; who is either some great man at court, that, being encouraged by the example of the prince and judge, openly and publicly requires a bribe also to do an ill thing; and without any shame or blushing promises to do it on that consideration; or a counsellor at the bar, who openly declares that he will speak in such a cause, though a bad one, and defend it, and not doubt of carrying it; or else this is some rich wicked man, that seeks to oppress his poor neighbour, and, being favoured by the prince and judge he has bribed, does without fear or

shame speak out the wickedness of his heart, and what an ill design he has against his neighbour, whose mischief, hurt, and ruin, he seeks:

so they wrap it up together;

or, “twist it together” F23; as cords are, which thereby become strong; slid so these three work up this mischievous business, and strengthen and establish it; and such a threefold cord of wickedness is not easily broken or unravelled: or, “they perplex it” F24; as thick branches of trees are implicated and wrapped together; so these agree to puzzle and perplex a cause, that they may have some show of carrying it with justice and truth. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “they trouble it”; confound the matter, and make it dark, dubious, and difficult. The Targum is, “they corrupt it”; or deprave it; put an ill sense on things, and make a wrong construction of them.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 (והישיב) “bene”, Drusius.

F21 So Grotius.

F23 (יבתוח) “contorquent”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; “contorquere solent”, Burkius; “contortuplicant”, Junius, Grotius; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 38. 2.

F24 “A radice (tbe) quae intricare significat, atque confusum reddere, atque perplexum”, Sanctius,

Micah 7:4

The best of them [is] as a brier

Good for nothing but for burning, very hurtful and mischievous, pricking and scratching those that have to do with them:

the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge;

which, if a man lays hold on to get over, or attempts to pass through, his hands will be pricked, his face scratched, and his clothes tore off his back; so the best of these princes, judges, and great men, who put on a show of goodness, and pretended to do justice, yet fetched blood, and got money out of everyone they were concerned with, and did them injury in one respect or another; or the best and most upright of the people of the land in general, that made the greatest pretensions to religion and virtue, yet in their dealings were sharp, and biting, and tricking; and took every fraudulent method to cheat, and overreach, and hurt men in their property:

the day of thy watchmen;

either which the true prophets of the Lord, sometimes called watchmen, foretold should come, but were discredited and despised, will now most assuredly come; and it will be found to be true what they said should come to pass: or the day of the false prophets, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; either which they predicted as a good day, and now it should be seen whether it would be so or not; or the day of their punishment, for their false prophecies and deception of the people: [and] thy visitation cometh;

the time that God would punish the people in general for their iniquities, as! well as their false prophets, princes, judges, and great men; who also may be designed by watchmen:

now shall be their perplexity:

the prince, the judge, and the great man, in just retaliation for their perplexing the cause of the poor; or of all the people, who would be surrounded and entangled with calamities and distresses, and not know which way to turn themselves, or how to get out of them.

Micah 7:5

Trust ye not in a friend

This is not said to lessen the value of friendship; or to discourage the cultivation of it with agreeable persons; or to dissuade from a confidence in a real friend; or in the least to weaken it, and damp the pleasure of true friendship, which is one of the great blessings of life; but to set forth the sad degeneracy of the then present age, that men, who pretended to be friends, were so universally false and faithless, that there was no dependence to be had on them:

put ye not confidence in a guide;

in political matters, in civil affairs, as civil magistrates, judges, counsellors; or in domestic matters. The Targum renders it, in one near akin. Kimchi interprets it of an elder brother; and Aben Ezra of a husband, who is to his wife the guide of her youth; and in religious matters as prophets, priests who were false and deceitful. It may design a very intimate friend, a familiar acquaintance, who might of all men be thought to be confided in; of whom the word is used, (Psalms 55:13) ;

keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom;

from a wife, and much more from a concubine or harlot. The Targum is,

“from the wife of thy covenant keep the words of thy mouth;”

divulge not the thoughts of thine heart, or disclose the secrets of it, to one so near; take care of speaking treason against the prince, or ill of a neighbour; it may be got out of such an one, and who may be so base as to betray it: or utter not anything whatever that is secret, the divulging of which may be detrimental; for, in such an age as this was, one in so near a relation might be wicked enough to discover it; see (Ecclesiastes 10:20) .

Micah 7:6

For the son dishonoureth the father

Speaks contemptibly of him; behaves rudely towards him; shows him no respect and reverence; exposes his failings, and makes him the object of his banter and ridicule; who ought to have honoured, revered, and obeyed him, being the instrument of his being, by whom he was brought up, fed, clothed, and provided for; base ingratitude!

the daughter riseth up against her mother;

by whom she has been used in the most tender and affectionate manner; this being still more unnatural, if possible, as being done by the female sex, usually more soft and pliable; but here, losing her natural affection, and forgetting both her relation and sex, replies to her mother, giving ill language; opposes and disobeys her, chides, wrangles, and scolds, and strives and litigates with her, as the Targum: or rises up as a witness against her, to her detriment, if not to the taking away of her life:

the daughter in law against her mother in law;

this is not so much to be wondered at as, the former instances, which serve to encourage and embolden those that are in such a relation to speak pertly and saucily; to reproach and make, light of mothers in law, as the Targum; or slight and abuse them:

a man's enemies [are] the men of his own house;

his sons and his servants, who should honour his person, defend his property, and promote his interest; but, instead of that, do everything that is injurious to him. These words are referred to by Christ, and used by him to describe the times in which he lived, (Matthew 10:35 Matthew 10:36) ; and the prophet may be thought to have an eye to the same, while he is settling forth the badness of his own times; and the Jews seem to think he had a regard to them, since they say F25, that, when the Messiah comes, "the son shall dishonour his father" plainly having this passage in view; and the; whole agrees with the times of Christ, in which there were few good men; it was a wicked age, an adulterous generation of men, he lived among; great corruption there was in princes, priests, and people; in the civil

and ecclesiastical rulers, and in all ranks and degrees of men; and he that ate bread with Christ, even Judas, lifted up his heel against him. The times in which Micah the prophet here speaks of seem to be the times of Ahaz, who was a wicked prince; and the former part of Hezekiah's reign, before a reformation was started, or at least brought about, in whose reigns he prophesied; though some have thought he here predicts the sad times in the reign of Manasseh, which is not so probable.

FOOTNOTES:

F25 Misn. Sotah, c. 9. sect. 15.

Micah 7:7

Therefore I will look unto the Lord

Here the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, declares what he would do in such circumstances, since there was no dependence on men of any rank, in any relation or connection with each other; he resolved to look alone to the Lord, and put his trust in him; look up to the Lord in prayer, use an humble freedom with him, place a holy confidence in him, expect all good things from him, and wait for them; look to Christ in the exercise of faith, which is, in New Testament language, a looking to Jesus; and the Targum interprets this clause of the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, who is to be looked unto, and believed in, as the Son of God, who is the true God, and eternal life; as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world; as the Mediator between God and men: as in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; as the Lord our righteousness, and as the only Saviour and Redeemer of men; and that for all things; when in darkness, for light; when weak, for strength; when sick, for healing; when hungry, for food; when disconsolate, for comfort; in short, for all supplies of grace here, and for eternal glory and happiness hereafter; and though he is in heaven, and not to be seen with our bodily eyes, yet he is held forth in the word of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; and is to be seen there with an eye of faith:

I will wait for the God of my salvation;

who is the author both of temporal, and of spiritual, and eternal salvation; for the light of his countenance, when he hides himself; for the performance of promises he has made; for answers of prayer put up to him; for discoveries of pardoning grace, having sinned against him; for help and assistance in all times of need; for the salvation of the Lord, for an

application of it, for the joys and comforts of it; and for Christ the Saviour, his coming in the flesh, which all the prophets and Old Testament saints were looking and waiting for: and who, doubtless, was upon the mind and in the view of the prophet when he uttered these words,

my God will hear me;

this is the language of faith, both to say that God was his God, and that he would hear and answer him; the former is the ground of the latter; God has an ear to hear when his people cry; and sooner or later it appears that he does hear, by giving an answer of peace unto them, which issues in their salvation they have been praying, looking, and waiting for. The Targum is,

“my God will receive my prayer.”

Micah 7:8

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy

These are the words of the prophet in the name of the church, continued in an apostrophe or address to his and their enemy; by whom may be meant, literally, the Chaldeans or Edomites, or both, who rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities the people of the Jews were brought into at it; see (Psalms 137:7 Psalms 137:8) (Obadiah 1:12) ; spiritually, Satan the great enemy of mankind, and especially of the church and people of God, to whom it is a pleasure to draw them into any sin or snare, and to do them any hurt and mischief; and also the Inert of the world, who hate and persecute the saints; and watch for their haltings, and rejoice at their falls into sin, and at any calamity and affliction that may attend them, though there is no just reason for it; since this will not always be the case of the saints, they will be in a better situation, and in more comfortable circumstances; and it will be the turn of their enemies to be afflicted, punished, and tormented:

when I fall, I shall arise;

or, “though I fall” F26, or “have fallen”; into outward afflictions and distresses, which come not by chance, but by divine appointment; or into the temptations of Satan, and by them, which sometimes is suffered for wise and purposes; or into sin, which even a good man, a truly righteous man, is frequently left unto; but then he does not fall from real goodness, from true grace, nor from his justifying righteousness, which is everlasting, and connected with eternal life: he may fall from a lively exercise of grace, from steadfastness in the faith, and a profession of it; but not from the principle of grace, nor a state of grace; or from the love and favour of God: he may fall, but not totally or finally, or so as to perish everlastingly; nor is he utterly

cast down, the Lord upholds him, and raises him up again; he rises, as the church here believes she should, out of his present state and condition, into a more comfortable one; not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord, under a sense of sin, by the exercise of true repentance for it, and by faith in Christ, and in a view of pardoning grace and mercy; see (Psalms 37:24) (Proverbs 24:16) ;

when I sit in darkness;

or “though” F1. The Targum is,

“as it were in darkness;”

not in a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of total darkness, but in affliction and distress; for, as light often signifies prosperity, so darkness adversity, any afflictive dispensation of Providence; and especially when this attended with desertion, or the hidings of God’s face; it is to be, not without any light of grace in the heart, or without the light of the word, or means of grace; but to be without the light of God’s countenance; which is very uncomfortable, and makes dark providences darker still; see (Isaiah 50:10) ; yet, notwithstanding all this, the Lord [shall be] a light unto me;

by delivering out of affliction; by lifting up the light of his countenance; by causing Christ the sun of righteousness to arise; by sending his Spirit to illuminate, refresh, and comfort; by his word, which is a lamp to the feet, a light to the path, a light shining in a dark place; see (Psalms 27:1) (112:4) . This passage is applied by the Jews F2 to the days of the Messiah.

FOOTNOTES:

F26 (כִּי נִפְלַחִי) “quamvis cecidi”, Drusius, Burkius.

F1 (כִּי אֲשֵׁב) “quamvis sedero”, Drusius; “quamvis sedeam”, Burkius.

F2 Debarim Rabba, parash. 11. fol. 245. 3.

Micah 7:9

I will bear the indignation of the Lord

The Targum prefaces these words with

“Jerusalem saith;”

and they are the words of the prophet, in the name of Jerusalem or the church, resolving in the strength of divine grace to bear the present

affliction, which had at least some appearance of divine indignation in it; not against the persons of God's people, who are always the objects of his love, and towards whom there is no fury in him; but against their sins, which are displeasing and abominable to him; and this is not in a vindictive way, for such indignation they could never bear; nor can any creature stand before it, or bear up under it; and, besides, Christ has bore the wrath and indignation of God in this sense for them but it here means the displicency and indignation of God in fatherly chastisements, consistent with the strongest love and affection for them; and to bear this is to be humble under the mighty hand of God, quietly to submit to it, and patiently to endure the affliction, without murmuring and repining, till the Lord pleases to remove it. The reason follows, because I have sinned against him;

the best of men sin; sin is the cause and reason of all affliction and distress, whether temporal or spiritual. The consideration of this tends to make and keep good men humble, and quietly submit to the chastising rod of their heavenly father, which they see it is right and proper should be used; and as knowing that they are chastised and afflicted less than their iniquities deserve; and that it is all for their good; a sense of sin stops their mouths, that they have nothing to say against God. The word (ajx) here used sometimes signifies the offering an expiatory sacrifice for sin to God; and Gussetius F3 thinks this is the meaning of it here; and observes, that with the oblation of a contrite heart, and works of charity, the satisfaction of Christ is to be pleaded, and in our way to be offered up to God the Judge, through faith flying to it; whereby the mind is disposed to bear correction patiently, in hope that favour will quickly shine forth in help and deliverance: until he plead cause, and execute judgment for me;

Christ the mighty Redeemer, and powerful and prevalent Mediator, not only pleads the cause of his people with God his Father, and obtains all blessings of grace for them; but he also pleads their cause against their enemies, an ungodly people that strive with them, persecute and distress them; and will in his own time do them justice, and execute vengeance, his righteous judgments, on those that hate them, and rise up against them, as he will on all the antichristian party: he will bring me forth to the light;

like a person taken out of prison, or out of a dungeon, to behold and enjoy the light of the sun and day. The sense is, that he will openly espouse the cause of his church, and give her honour and glory publicly before men; bring forth her righteousness as the light, and her judgment as the noon day; and make her innocence appear as clear as the day, and bring her at last to the light of glory; see (Psalms 37:6) (Isaiah 58:8 Isaiah 58:10) ; [and] I shall behold his righteousness:

the equity of his proceedings with his people, in chastising and afflicting them, that they are all right and good; his justice in punishing their enemies, and executing judgment on them; his goodness and beneficence to the saints, all his ways being mercy and truth; his faithfulness in the fulfilment of his promises; and the righteousness of Christ, which justifies them before God, renders them acceptable to him, will answer for them in a time to come, and introduce them into his everlasting kingdom and glory.

FOOTNOTES:

F3 Ebr. Comment. p. 923.

Micah 7:10

Then [she that is] mine enemy shall see [it]

The Chaldeans and Edomites shall see people of the Jews rising out of their calamities, brought out of the darkness of their captivity in Babylon, and enjoying the light of peace and prosperity in their own land. Some editions of the Targum, and Jarchi and Kimchi, have, in their glosses on this verse and (Micah 7:9) , Rome, of whom they interpret this enemy, as Mr. Pocock observes; and so R. Elias F4 says the Targum is, “then shall Rome see”; by which they mean the Christians, in opposition to the Jews; otherwise it would not be amiss to interpret it of Rome Papal, or antichrist, in opposition to the church of God; seeing the antichristian party will see witnesses of Christ, slain for his sake, rise again, and ascend to heaven, or be brought into a glorious and comfortable state; see (Revelation 11:12) ; and may be applied to any age of the church, and to any particular saints raised out of a state of darkness and affliction into a prosperous one, in the sight of their enemies, and in spite of them, to their great mortification; see (Psalms 23:4-6) ;

and shame shall cover her which said unto me, where is the Lord thy God?

as the Heathens; the Chaldeans, did to the Jews, (Psalms 115:2) ; and which must be very cutting to them, as it was to David, (Psalms 42:10) ; when they flouting and jeering said, where is thy God thou boastedst of, and didst put thy trust and confidence in, that he would deliver and save thee? what is become of him, and of thy confidence in him? The Targum is, “where art thou that art redeemed by the Word of the Lord thy God?” but when they shall see that the Lord God has returned unto them, and wrought salvation for them, they will be ashamed of their flouts and jeers; and by reason of their sad disappointment, add the change of things for the worse to

them, who now will be brought into calamity and distress themselves:

mine eyes shall behold her;

the enemy: their fall, as the Targum; being in a most despicable and ruinous condition, under the vengeance of the Almighty; and that with pleasure and satisfaction, not from a private spirit of revenge, but because of the glory of divine justice, which will be displayed in their righteous destruction; see (Psalms 58:10) ;

now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets;

that is, entirely conquered, and utterly destroyed; reduced to, the utmost meanness, and had in the greatest contempt: this was fulfilled when Babylon was taken by the Medea and Persians; and when the Edomites were conquered and brought into subjection to the Jews by the Maccabees; and will be the case of all the enemies of Christ and his church, of all the antichristian states, one day.

FOOTNOTES:

F4 In Tishbi, p. 227.

Micah 7:11

[In] the day that thy walls are to be built

These words are not spoken to the enemy, as some think; either the Chaldeans, the walls of whose city, Babylon, being demolished by the Persians, it would be a long day or time before they were rebuilt and when their power of sending their decrees abroad among the nations would be far off: or to the enemy that should think to build up their walls with the spoils of Israel, in the time of Gog and Magog, and when their decree determined over the nations and Israel would also be far off; but they are the words of the prophet to the church and people of God, comforting them with observing, that there would be a day when the walls of Jerusalem, and the temple, which would lie in ruins during their captivity, would be rebuilt; and which was fulfilled in the times of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah; and so the Targum,

“that time the congregation of Israel shall be built;”

and which had a further accomplishment, in a spiritual sense, in the first times of the Gospel, when the church of Christ was built up, and established in the world and will still have a greater completion in the latter day, when

the tabernacle of David, or church of Christ, shall be raised that is fallen, and its breaches closed, and ruins repaired, (Amos 9:11) ;

[in] that day shall the decree be far removed;

which, as it literally respects Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of that after seventy years captivity, may signify either the decree of God concerning that captivity, which would then cease, according to the time fixed by it; or the cruel laws and edicts of the Babylonians, which should no more bind and press the Jews, and be as a heavy yoke upon them; those statutes, which were not good, that were given them. So the Targum,

“at that time the decrees of the nations shall cease;”

or the decree of Artaxerxes, forbidding and hindering the rebuilding of the city: but if the phrase “far removed” signifies its being divulged and spread far abroad, as it is interpreted by some; then it may refer to the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the city and temple; and which was revived and confirmed by Darius Hystaspis, and by Darius Longimanus, and which was published everywhere; and by means of which the Jews from all parts were encouraged to come up to their own land, and proselytes with them; and which sense suits well with what follows: and as this, in a spiritual sense, may have regard to the church of Christ in Gospel times, it may signify the removal of human laws, traditions, rites, and ceremonies, respecting religious things, among the Gentiles, and their giving way to those of God and Christ; or the promulgation of the Gospel in all parts, called a decree, (Psalms 2:6) ; because a revelation of the decrees of God, respecting the salvation of men, and to which it owes its efficacy; by means of which many would be brought to the church, and the kingdom of Christ be enlarged, and spread everywhere, as follows:

Micah 7:12

[In] that day [also] he shall come even to thee

Which words also are not directed to the enemy, as some interpret them; as to Chaldea or Babylon; and the sense be, that Cyrus should come thither, and take it; or any more remote enemy of the Jews in the latter day, to whom the day of the Lord should come, or his decree of vengeance or judgment upon them, or any enemy to waste and destroy them; but they are a continued address to Jerusalem or the church, signifying that “he”, the people of the Jews, the body of them, with the proselyted Gentiles, should come from all parts to Jerusalem to rebuild it upon the decree of Cyrus; and

that multitudes of all, or at least many nations, should flock to the church of Christ, upon the publication of the Gospel:

from Assyria:

where many of the Jews, and even of the ten tribes, were, whither they were carried captive:

and [from] the fortified cities;

in Assyria, and other countries, where the Jews might be placed, either as prisoners, or to do servile work, as repairing the fortifications; or for the defence of the country, from which they were to be and were released upon Cyrus taking of Babylon; and was a type of the redemption by Christ from greater bondage. It may be rendered the cities of Egypt, as Kimchi observes, here and in (2 Kings 19:24) (Isaiah 19:6) ; and so Ben Melech: it is interpreted by some Matzor, being the same with Mitzraim, which is the name for Egypt; and the sense would be more easy, as well as the words run more smoothly, thus, “shall come from Assyria even to the cities of Egypt”: and then it follows,

and from the fortress even to the river;

or from Egypt, to the river Euphrates, which was one of the boundaries of the land of Israel:

and from sea to sea;

from the Persian sea to the Mediterranean sea, or from the Red sea thither, and from the several maritime parts where they inhabited:

and [from] mountain to mountain;

from Mount Taurus to Carmel, or Lebanon, or Hor; or from the several mountains to which they had fled to, safety, and where they had dwelt. It may respect the extent of the church and kingdom of Christ in the latter day, enlarged by the numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles in all parts of the world. The Jews shall be gathered from all places where they are, and join themselves to the church of Christ; and these several places, particularly Assyria, Egypt and the islands of the sea from whence they shall be brought, are mentioned in other prophecies; see (Isaiah 11:11) (Zechariah 10:9-11) ; though this may respect, not barely the conversion and gathering of them to Christ and his church, but of the Gentiles also in those several countries, thus; they “shall come from Assyria, and the fortified cities”; that is, from the Turkish empire; the land of Assyria, and its fortified cities, being in the possession of the Turks, and in whose dominions many Jews at this day reside; and not only they, but multitudes in the Ottoman empire, shall be converted in the latter day, and become members of Christian churches; signified by the flocks of Kedar, and the rams of Nebaioth, that shall be gathered to the church, and minister there, (Isaiah 60:7) ; and they shall

come “from the fortress even to the river”; from everyone of the fortified cities before mentioned to the river Euphrates, which will be dried up to make way for the kings or kingdoms of the east, for their conversion to Christ, and embracing his Gospel; even the large kingdoms of Persia, Tartary, China, &c. (Revelation 16:12) ; or “from Egypt to the river Euphrates”; and so signifies the same as before, Egypt being part of the Turkish dominions; or else the Roman jurisdiction, spiritually called Egypt, may be meant, (Revelation 11:8) ; and in several Popish countries are many Jews, who will be called from thence; as well as many of the Papists themselves shall be called out of mystical Babylon, and embrace the true religion of Christ: “and from sea to sea”; this is a well known description of the amplitude of Christ’s church and kingdom in Gospel times, especially in the latter day; see (Psalms 72:8) (Zechariah 9:10) ; or, as it may be rendered, “the sea from the sea” F5; that is, the inhabitants of the sea, or of the islands of it, shall come from thence to the church, see (Isaiah 11:11) ; these are the same with the abundance of the sea, that shall be converted to Christ, and join his people in the latter day, as in our isle and others, (Isaiah 40:5) ; “and [from] mountain to mountain”; or rather, “and mountain shall come to the mountain” F6; that is, the inhabitants of the mountain, or of Rome, that is situated on seven mountains, of mystical Babylon, the great mountain; these shall be called from hence to Mount Zion, the church of the living God, where Christ with the 144,000 will be; and which shall then be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it, (Revelation 14:1) (Isaiah 2:2 Isaiah 2:3) . The Targum is,

“at that time the captives shall be gathered from Assyria, and the strong cities, and from Churmini (or Armenia), the great and the fortified cities, even unto Euphrates, and the western sea, and the mountains of the mountain.”

FOOTNOTES:

F5 (יַם מִיָּם) “et mare a mari”, Montanus, Burkius.

F6 (וְהָרַי הָהָר) “et mons [veniet] ad montem”, Cocceius, Burkius.

Micah 7:13

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate

Not the land of Chaldea, as some; or the land of the nations, as Jarchi and Kimchi; but the land of Israel. That part of it, which was possessed by

the ten tribes, was made desolate by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and that which was inhabited by the two tribes, by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and this desolation was to be, “notwithstanding” the above prophecies, and prior to the fulfilment of them. So some render the words, as in the margin of our Bibles “after the land hath been desolate” F7; and it is observed, partly to prevent wicked men promising themselves impunity from the above prophecies; and partly to prevent despair in good men, when such a desolation should be made. And then again it was made desolate by the Romans, previous to the spread and establishment of the church of Christ, by the success of the Gospel in the Gentile world, in the first times of it; and by the conversion of the Jews, and bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, in, he last times of it;

because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings:

because of the sins of the inhabitants of the land of Israel: the desolation made by the kings of Assyria and Babylon was for the idolatry of Israel and Judah, and other sins; and the desolation made by the Romans for the Jews rejection of the Messiah.

FOOTNOTES:

F7 (וְהָיְתָה הָאֶרֶץ לְשִׁמְמָה) “postquam fuerit haec terra desolationi”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, Drusius.

Micah 7:14

Feed thy people with thy rod

These are either the words of God the Father to Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, calling upon him to do his office as such; to feed the people he had given him, the sheep of his hand, the flock of his pasture, by his Spirit, and with his word and ordinances; see (Zechariah 11:5) ; or of Christ to his ministers, his undershepherds, to feed his sheep and his lambs, the people committed to their care and charge, with wholesome words, with sound and good doctrine, by faithfully preaching the Gospel, and administering the ordinances to them: or rather the words of the prophet, a prayer of his to God or Christ, to take care of the people of God in their desolate state, in captivity; to guide and lead them, protect and defend them, by his power and providence, as a shepherd directs, leads, governs, and preserves his flock with his pastoral crook or rod; or, as before, to feed the church of God as a shepherd does his flock, lead them into good pastures, and secure them from all their enemies: and this, being a prayer of faith,

may be considered as a prophecy or prediction of what would be; and so some render the words, “thou shalt feed thy people” F8. The Targum is,

“feed thy people with thy word, the people of thine inheritance, in the age which is to be renewed;”

in the new world, the world to come; plainly referring to the times of the Messiah;

the flock of thine heritage;

who are like to sheep for their harmlessness and innocence, and to a flock of them, being associated together, and folded in the church; and though but a little flock, yet the lot, the portion, the inheritance of Christ; all which is a strong reason for his feeding, keeping, and preserving them, being committed to his care and charge for that purpose:

which dwell solitary [in] the wood;

dwell alone in the world, which is like a wood and a wilderness; separated from the men of the world; distinguished by the grace of God, chosen and called out from among them, and different from them both in principle and practice: this may have respect to the Jews, in their dispersion, living separate from and unmixed with the nations of the world; or rather to their dwelling in safety and security under the protection of the great Shepherd, the Messiah, David their Prince, when they shall be returned to their own land in the latter day:

in the midst of Carmel;

or of a fruitful field, as Carmel was; enjoying all happiness and prosperity, temporal and spiritual:

let them feed [in] Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old;

places in the land of Israel famous for rich and fat pastures; and so express the great plenty of good things wished for, and which will be enjoyed by the Jews when converted to Christ, and replaced in their own land; and are an emblem of those spiritual good things, and of those rich and green pastures of the word and ordinances, which the great Shepherd is desired to lead, and does lead, his people into; see (Psalms 23:1 Psalms 23:2) (Ezekiel 34:14) ; these places are now in the hand of the Turks, and so the words may be a petition for their conversion, as well as for the Jews, that this country may no more be inhabited by Heathens, but by the Israel of God, as Gulichius F9 very well observes.

FOOTNOTES:

F8 (רָבַע) “pascas”, so some in Vatablus.

Micah 7:15**According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt,**

&c.] This is an answer of the Lord to the prayer of the prophet, assuring him, and the church he represents, and on whose account he applies, that there would be as great a deliverance wrought for them, and as wonderful things done, as when Israel was brought out of the land of Egypt, which was effected with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and was attended with amazing events; as the plagues in Egypt; the passage of the Israelites through the Red see, and the destruction of the Egyptians in it:

will I show unto him marvellous [things];

that is, unto the people of the Lord, the flock of his heritage, the solitary and peculiar people, fed and preserved by him: as the deliverance out of Egypt; was the Lord's work, so the deliverance from Babylon; as the one was the work of his power upon the heart of Pharaoh to let the people go, so the other as great an act of his power working upon the mind of Cyrus, stirring him up to let the captives go free, without price or reward; yea, to furnish them with necessaries by the way, and to rebuild their city and temple: and as Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red sea, so the kingdom of Babylon was swallowed up by the Medes and Persians; yea, in some respects the latter deliverance exceeded the former, and erased the remembrance of it; see (Jeremiah 16:14 Jeremiah 16:15) ; and that redemption by Christ, which both these were typical of, was greater and more marvellous than either, being a deliverance from, and an abolition and destruction of sin, Satan, the law, hell, and death, and attended with things the most wonderful and surprising; as the birth of Christ of a virgin; the miracles done by him in life, and at death; the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him and his apostles, and the amazing success of them, especially in the Gentile world, being testified and confirmed by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. This passage, both by ancient and modern Jews F11, is applied to the times of the Messiah. So in an ancient F12 book of theirs, speaking of the times of the Messiah, they say,

“from that day all the signs and wonders, and mighty works, which the Lord did in Egypt, he will do for Israel, as it is said, “according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt””

It is also said, by a modern writer F13 of theirs,

“because of the miracles and wonders which shall be in the days of the Messiah, such as the gathering of the captives, the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of Gog and Magog, besides other miracles and wonders, the end of the redemption is called the end of wonders in (Daniel 12:6) ; and this is that which God has promised by his prophets, particularly Micah, (Micah 7:15) ; “according to the days” and from what follows, with the rest of the verses to the end of the book, it is manifest that these promises are not yet fulfilled, but will be fulfilled in the days of the Messiah.”

From whence it appears, that it was the sense of the ancient Jews, as well as some modern ones, that miracles would be wrought in the days of the Messiah; though some of them reject them, and look not for them; particularly Maimonides F14 says,

“let it not enter into thine heart that the King Messiah hath need to do signs and wonders; as that he shall renew things in the world, or raise the dead, and the like; these are things which fools speak of; the thing is not so.”

But however, certain it is, the ancient Jews expected miracles to be done by the Messiah; hence some, in the times of Jesus, said, “when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?” (John 7:31) ; and accordingly the miracles Jesus did were full proofs of his being the Messiah, and were wrought for that purpose, and owned as such; wherefore the above Jew, though he is right in the application of this passage to the times of the Messiah, yet is wrong in saying these promises are not yet fulfilled, since they have had a full accomplishment in the Messiah Jesus; nor is another to be looked for, or such miracles to be hereafter wrought.

FOOTNOTES:

F11 Zohar in Gen. fol. 16. 1. 2. & in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & in Deut. 99. 2. & 118. 3. Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 32. p. 277.

F12 Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2. Vid. ib. in Gen. fol. 16. 1. 2. & in Numb. fol. 99. 2. & in Deut. 118. 3.

F13 R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 32. p. 277.

F14 Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 3.

Micah 7:16

The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might,

&c.] The Chaldeans or Babylonians, when they shall see the wonderful things done by the Lord in the deliverance of his people out of their hands, shall be ashamed of their own power and might, in which they trusted, and of which they boasted; but now shall be baffled and defeated, and not able to stop the progress of the arms of Cyrus, or detain the Jews any longer their captives; or they shall be confounded at the power and strength the Jews will have to repossess their land, rebuild their city and temple, under the encouragement and protection of the king of Persia; and as this may refer to a further accomplishment in Gospel times, it may respect the confusion the Gentile world would be in at the mighty power and spread of the Gospel, in the conversion of such multitudes by it, and in the abolition of the Pagan religion. Kimchi interprets this of the nations that shall be gathered together with Gog and Magog against Jerusalem in the latter day; see (Ezekiel 38:15 Ezekiel 38:16 Ezekiel 38:23) (39:21) ;

they shall lay [their] hand upon [their] mouth:

be silent, and boast no more of themselves; nor blaspheme God and his word; nor insult his people; nor oppose his Gospel, or open their mouths any more against his truths and his ordinances:

their ears shall be deaf;

hearing so much of the praises of God, of the success of his interest, and of the happiness of his peopled dinned in their ears, they will be stunned with it, and scarce know what they hear; become deaf with the continual noise of it, which will be disagreeable to them; and will choose to hear no more, and therefore through envy and grief will stop their ears at what is told them.

Micah 7:17

They shall lick the dust like a serpent

Whose food is the dust of the earth, according to the curse pronounced on it, (Genesis 3:14) ; and which is either its, natural food it chooses to live on, as some serpents however are said F15 to do; or, going upon its belly, it cannot but take in a good deal of the dust of the earth along with its

food; and hereby is signified the low, mean, abject, and cursed estate and condition of the seed of the serpent, wicked and ungodly men, the enemies of Christ and his people; who will be forced to yield subjection to him and his church, and will pretend the most profound respect for them, and the highest veneration of them. The allusion seems to be to the manner of the eastern nations, who, in complimenting their kings and great men, bowed so low to the ground with their faces, as to take up with their mouths the very dust of it. Particularly it is said of the Persians, that they first kiss the pavement on which the king treads, before they speak unto him, as Quistorpius on the place relates; and Valerius Maximus F16 says, that when Darius Hystaspis was declared king by the neighing of his horse, the rest of the six candidates alighted from their horses, and prostrated their bodies to the ground, as is the manner of the Persians, and saluted him king; and Herodotus F17 observes the same, custom among the Persians; and to this custom the poet Martial F18 refers; and Drusius says it is a custom in Asia to this day, that, when any go into the presence of a king, they kiss the ground, which is a token of the great veneration they have for him. The phrase is used of the enemies of the, Messiah, and of the converted Jews and Gentiles at the latter day, and is expressive of their great submission to them; see (Psalms 72:9) (Isaiah 49:23) ;

they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth;

who put out their heads and draw them in again upon the least notice or approach of danger; or like serpents, as Jarchi and Kimchi, which lurk in holes, and creep out of them oft their bellies, or any other creeping things. The word F19 here used signifies a tremulous and tumultuous motion, like the wriggling of a worm out of the earth; or the hurry of ants, when their nests are kicked or thrown up: this is expressive of the confusion and perturbation of the enemies of the Lord and his people; of the Babylonians, who were obliged in a hurry to leave their palaces, as the Targum and Aben Ezra interpret their holes, and their fortresses and towers, and deliver them to the Medes and Persians; and of Gog and Magog, and the antichristian states, who will be obliged to abandon their places of abode, and creep out of sight, and be reduced to the lowest and meanest condition;

they shall be afraid of the Lord our God:

because of the glory of his majesty, the greatness of his power, and for fear of his judgments:

and shall fear because of thee;

O God, or Israel, as Kimchi; the church of God, whom they despised and reproached before; but now shall be seized with a panic, and live in the utmost dread of, because of the power and glory of God in the midst of

them, and lest they should fall a sacrifice to them.

FOOTNOTES:

F15 Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 44. col. 27.

F16 L. 7. c. 3. sect. 2.

F17 Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 12.

F18 “Et turpes humilesque, supplicesque, Pictorum sola basiate regum”.
Epigram. l. 10. Ep. 71.

F19 (wzgry) “contremiscent”, Munster, Tigurine version, Cocceius;
“fremet, sive tumultuabuntur”, Calvin; “trepide prorepent”, Burkius.

Micah 7:18

Who [is] a God like unto thee

There is no God besides him, none so great, so mighty, as he; none like him for the perfections of his nature; for the works of his hands; for the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace; and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy, as follows:

that pardoneth iniquity:

that “lifts” it up, and “takes” it away, as the word F20 signifies; thus the Lord has taken the sins of his people off of them, and laid them on Christ, and he has bore them, and carried them away, as the antitype of the scapegoat, never to be seen and remembered any more; and whereas the guilt of sin lies sometimes as a heavy burden upon their consciences, he lifts it up, and takes it away, by sprinkling the blood of Christ upon them, and by applying his pardoning grace and mercy to them: pardon of sin is peculiar to God; none can forgive it but he against whom it is committed; forgiveness of sin is with him, promised by him in covenant, proclaimed in Christ, by him obtained and published in the Gospel:

and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?

the people of God are his portion, his lot, and his inheritance; they are a remnant according to the election of grace, chosen of God, taken into his covenant, redeemed by Christ, and called by grace, and brought to repent and believe; these God forgives, even all their transgressions, sins, and iniquities of every kind; which is here expressed by another word, “passing [them] by”, or “passing over [them]”: sin is a transgression or passing over the law, and pardon is a passing over sin; God taking no notice of it, as if he saw it not; not imputing it to his people, or calling them to an account for it;

or condemning and punishing them according to the desert of it; but hiding his face from it, and covering it:

he retaineth not his anger for ever;

that which he seemed to have against his people, and appeared in some of the dispensations of his providence, is not continued and lengthened out, and especially for ever, but it disappears; he changes the course of his providence, and his conduct and behaviour to his people, and, hews them his face and favour, and manifests his forgiving love; which is a turning himself from his anger; see (Psalms 85:2 Psalms 85:3) (Isaiah 12:1) ;

because he delighteth [in] mercy;

which is natural to him, abundant with him, and exercised according to his sovereign will and pleasure, very delightful to him; he takes pleasure in showing mercy to miserable creatures, and in those that hope in it, (Psalms 147:11) ; this is the spring of pardon, which streams through the blood of Christ.

FOOTNOTES:

F20 (אז) “tollens”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Calvin; “aufercus”, Drusius; “qui aufers”, Grotius.

Micah 7:19

He will turn again

From his anger, and show his face and favour; which is not inconsistent with his everlasting and unchangeable love; for anger is not opposite to love, and is only a displicency at sin, and not at the persons of his people; and, properly speaking, is not in God; is rather in appearance than in reality; when his people sin against him, he shows himself as if he was angry; he turns away from them, and withdraws his gracious presence and sensible communion from them; but when they are brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it, he returns to them, manifests his love to them again, and applies his pardoning grace, which is the thing believed would be done; it is only another expression of that, as all the rest that follow are: the prophet, or the church, dwells on this article of grace, and heaps up words to express it by, as if they could never say too much of it, or sufficiently explain it. The Targum is,

“his word shall return;”

he will have compassion upon us;

the Lord is naturally compassionate; he is full of compassion, he has a heart of compassion; these are tender mercies, and never fail, and which are exercised in a sovereign way; pardon of sin flows from hence; every manifestation or it is a display thereof: sin brings afflictions on the saints, and then the Lord pities them, and is afflicted with them; sin grieves them, and he is as it were grieved for them; it wounds them, and then, as the good and compassionate Samaritan, he pours in the oil and wine of pardoning grace, and heals them; they are, while in this state, in such circumstances often as need his compassion, and they may be assured of it, (Psalms 78:38) ;

he will subdue our iniquities;

which maybe understood also as a further explanation of the grace of pardon: sin is an enemy to God and his people; it is too strong and mighty for them; it reigns over them in a state of nature; they are under the power of it, and cannot get rid of it, its influence, guilt, and punishment; Christ has conquered it, made an end of it, and took it away; God tramples upon it, as a conqueror does upon the necks of his enemies; it is subdued by him, and is under his feet; which he treats with contempt, disdains to look upon, keeps it under, so that it shall never rise again to the condemnation of his people; he overcomes the provocation of it, removes the guilt by pardon, and secures from the punishment of it: or this may be considered as the effect of pardon; as what is done in consequence of it, by the Spirit and grace of God in sanctification; when not only the deeds of the body are mortified through the Spirit, or the outward conversation reformed, but the inward power of sin is weakened; it is laid under the restraints of efficacious grace, and is kept under by it; so that it shall not and cannot have the dominion over the saints again, of which they may be confident, (Romans 6:14) ; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea;

never to be seen any more; though they are seen with the eye of omniscience, and taken notice of by the eye of providence, yet not beheld with the eye of avenging justice, that being satisfied by Christ; besides, all the sins of God's people have been removed from them to Christ, and by him carried away into the land of oblivion; so that they are no more to be seen on them, who are through his blood and righteousness without fault, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and, being out of sight, they are out of mind, never remembered any more, and like things cast into the sea, destroyed and lost: perhaps there may be some allusion to the Egyptians drowned in the Red sea; and what is cast into the sea, especially into the depths of it, is irrecoverable, not to be fetched up again, nor does it rise

more; and so it is with the sins of God's people, forgiven for Christ's sake, even "all" of them; for they have all been bore by Christ, and are covered, blotted out, and pardoned, not one remains unforgiven; see (Isaiah 38:17) . This is an apostrophe of the prophet unto God. The Targum is,

``and he will cast into the depths of the sea all the sins of Israel;"

and it may denote their being loathsome and abominable to him, and therefore here cast by him. It is very common in Jewish writings to say of anything that is useless, abominable, accursed, and utterly rejected, that it is to be east into the salt sea. For instance

``Aquila the proselyte divided an inheritance with his brother (a Gentile), and he cast the profit of it into the salt sea: three doctors there were; one said, the price of the idol he cast into the salt sea; another said, he cast the price of his part of the idol into the salt sea; and the other said, he cast the idol itself into the salt sea F21."

Again it is said F23,

``a sin offering, whose owner is dead, goes into the salt sea."

The Heathens used sea water for the purgation and expiation of sin; hence the poet F24, to aggravate the wickedness of a very wicked man, observes, that the ocean itself could not wash away his sins. And Cicero F25, speaking of the law of the Romans for the punishment of parricides, which ordered that they should be sewed up alive in sacks, and cast into the river, observes the wisdom and propriety of it; they would not, says he, have them cast naked into the river, lest, when they should be carried into the sea, they should pollute that by which other things that are defiled are thought to be expiated. So Iphigenia is made to say F26 that the sea washes away all the sins of men. These are the Jewish and Heathenish notions; whether there is any allusion to them may be considered; however, certain it is, that nothing short of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, or the sea of Christ's blood, can wash away sin; that cleanses from all sin; and happy are they whose sins are cast in thither, or are expiated and purged away thereby!

FOOTNOTES:

F21 T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 25. 4.

F23 Ibid. Sotah, fol. 19. 1. Vid. ibid. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2. & Nazir, fol. 53. 1.

F24 “Suscipit, O Gelli, quantum non ultima Thetis, Nec genitor
lympharum abluit Oceanus”. Catullus.

F25 Oratio 2. pro Sexto Roscio.

F26 Euripides in Tauro.

Micah 7:20

Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob

That is, the promise made to Jacob, the Lord would faithfully perform and make good to his posterity, natural and spiritual, especially to those who are Israelites indeed; [and] the mercy to Abraham;

the gracious promises made to him, which sprung from mere grace and mercy; all respecting his natural and spiritual seed; and especially the promise of the coming of the Messiah, that seed of his in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and which is the eminent instance of the mercy and grace of God to Jews and Gentiles, that walk in the steps of Abraham; see (Luke 1:68 Luke 1:72 Luke 1:73) ; which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old;

or the promises both of multiplying the seed of Abraham, and of giving them the land of Canaan, and of the Messiah springing from them, were confirmed by an oath, (Genesis 22:16-18) . The Targum is,

“thou wilt give the truth of Jacob to his sons, as thou hast sworn to him in Bethel; the goodness of Abraham to his seed after him, as thou hast sworn to him between the pieces; thou wilt remember to us the binding of Isaac, who was bound upon the altar before thee; thou wilt do with us the good things which thou hast sworn to our fathers, from the days of old;”

which Kimchi interprets of the three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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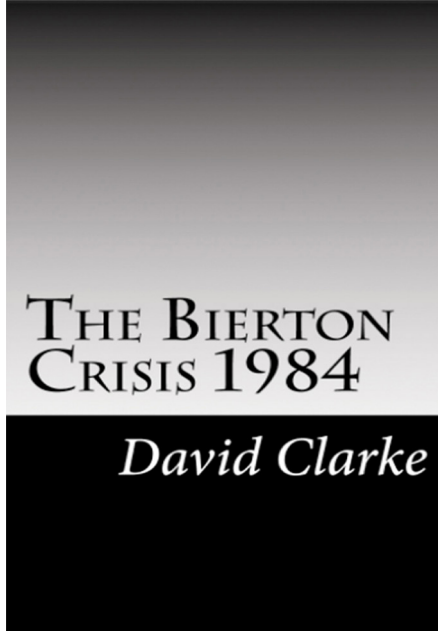
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THE BIERTON CRISIS



The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.

His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

[A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY BOOK 1](#)

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL
DIVINITY, BOOK 1

Dr John Gill DD

A System of Practical Truths

THIS IS BOOK 1 Treating The Subjects:

Of God, His Works, Names, Nature, Perfections And Persons. And Contains:

Chapters

1 Of The Being Of God

2 Of The Holy Scriptures

3 Of The Names Of God

4 Of The Nature Of God

5 Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His
Immutability In Particular.

6 Of The Infinity Of God,

7 Of The Life Of God.

8 Of The Omnipotence Of God.

9 Of The Omniscience Of God.

10 Of The Wisdom Of God.

11 Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It

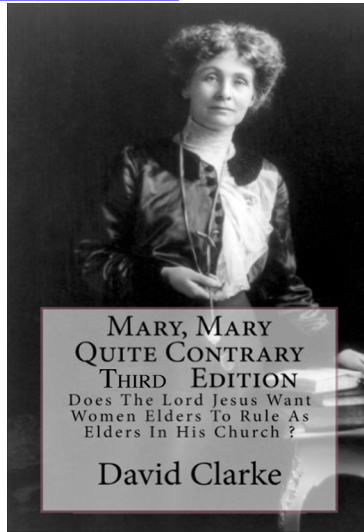
12 Of The Love Of God

13 Of The Grace Of God.

14 Of The Mercy Of God.

- 15 Of The Long suffering Of God.
- 16 Of The Goodness Of God.
- 17 Of The Anger And Wrath Of God.
- 18 Of The Hatred Of God.
- 19 Of The Joy Of God.
- 20 Of The Holiness Of God.
- 21 Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God.
- 22 Of The Veracity Of God.
- 23 Of The Faithfulness Of God
- 24 Of The Sufficiency And Perfection
Of God.
- 25 Of The Blessedness Of God.
- 26 Of The Unity Of God.
- 27 Of A Plurality In The Godhead, Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The Unity Of
The
Divine Essence.
- 28 Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative
Properties, Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity.
- 29 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of
The Father.
- 30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.
- 31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

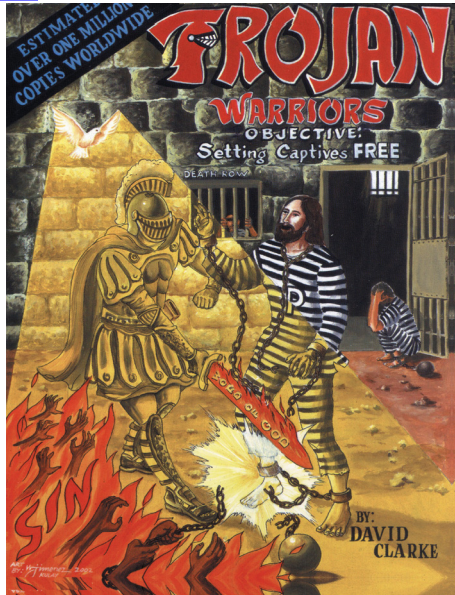
MARY MARY QUITE CONTRARY



By David Clarke

When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county. The Suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst (1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she. In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness by the suffragettes and since then there have been legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with the development of the feminist movement and the appointment of persons from the LGBT community to responsible positions in the Church of England. All of this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong. This book seeks to show what the bible has to say about the role of women in the church and family. Since these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this is our wisdom.

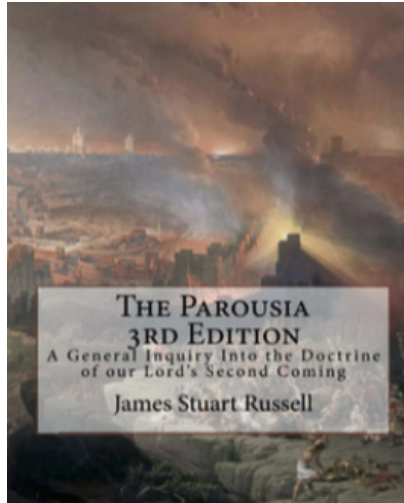
TROJAN WARRIORS



Setting Captives Free. Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license, in 1967. They both turned from their lives of crimes in remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation. David the younger brother became a Christian, after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005. When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission. They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ . This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid

Prison. They are the, “Trojan Warriors”, who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection. Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

THE PAROUSIA



James Stuart Russell

Foreword By Ed Stevens

The word “Parousia” (par-oo-see-ah) is not a household word, but students of endtime prophecy know it is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. It comes from two Greek words (“para” beside, and “ousia” state of being) and literally means “to be beside” (present with someone). It came to be a more specific reference to important people coming for an extended (but not long-term) visit to one of their subject territories (a “visitation”). It can refer either to the initial arrival or the afterward presence. It is used in the New Testament almost exclusively of Christ’s Second Coming.

Russell examines every significant New Testament text about Christ’s return, to see when it would occur and what it would be like. Since he believed the Second Coming occurred in the first century at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, his view is labeled “Preterist.”

The word “Preterist” is another prophetic term with which many are unfamiliar. According to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, a Preterist is “a theologian who believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already been fulfilled.” A Preterist is the opposite of a Futurist. Futurists teach that the three major endtime events (parousia, resurrection, judgment) are still future in fulfillment, whereas Preterists teach these events have already been fulfilled.

Some may wonder what difference it makes?

Everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. How so?

Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make time- restricted predictions about His return and the other endtime events. They do not merely suggest that Christ's Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they unequivocally affirm it.

Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use those "time statements" to discredit Jesus and the New Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ's return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn't happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken.

Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

You might wonder what these "time texts" are? Matthew 16:27-28 is a good example. This book deals with every one of them. They were not mistaken when they predicted Christ's return in their lifetime. It really occurred, at AD 70.

Theologians who study endtime prophecy consider Russell's book a classic defense of the Preterist view. It is this book, more than any other during the past 125 years, which has moved so many toward Preterism.

Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell's book as having a significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to recommend Russell's book and encourage the spread of Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell does. In his Foreword to the 1999 Baker Books reprint of *The Parousia* (pp. ix-x), Sproul says:

Russell's work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of the time-frame references of New Testament prophecy and his understanding of the main reference to the parousia. ...Russell's book has forced me to take the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the radical significance of this event in redemptive history. It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our Lord's close-at hand coming in judgment.... I can never read the New Testament again the same way I read it before reading *The Parousia*.

Until this book appeared in 1878, Preterism had little systemization.

This book began that process, and remains one of the most consistent and comprehensive explanations of Preterism available. The Preterist view flourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that. What the Gutenberg printing press did for the Protestant reformation, the Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

The Internet is the perfect place to publish helpful material like this. One of the first books to be posted on Preterist websites was Russell's *Parousia*. Even though the electronic version has had many readers in the short five years it has been available, it has not diminished demand for printed copies. This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

Russell did a remarkable job of interpretation compared to previous centuries. He pointed the way in a number of areas that we are only just now beginning to develop further. He devoted over 170 pages to the book of Revelation. One of his best statements is there. He uses the "time" statements in the first three verses of Revelation to show how crucial the date of writing is to the interpretation of the book:

It may truly be said that the key has all the while hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them. (*Parousia*, p. 367)

Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the "Parousia" (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of endtime prophecy.

Futurists and Partial Preterists for too long have hidden behind the excuse of wanting explicit "time indicators" before assigning a text to AD 70. Russell and modern Preterists have exhaustively shown that all NT endtime texts have first century "audience relevance" written all over them, which functions as an implicit time indicator. The New Testament was not written to us originally. We are reading someone else's mail. The primary task of a Bible interpreter is to discover what the original author intended to communicate to his original audience, not just to ask what it "could" mean to us today.

THREE DIFFICULT TEXTS SIMPLIFIED

There are three scriptures which most partial preterists think are yet to be fulfilled: Acts 1:11, 1 Cor. 15:20-57, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Russell shows that an AD 70 fulfillment is the most consistent interpretation of these texts. However, he does not deal very much with Acts 1:11. As a result, many

Futurists and Partial Preterists have used this text to teach another major return of Christ still in the future. Modern Preterists have now shown that these three texts contain implicit time indicators and contextual clues which connect them inseparably to the Parousia and final consummation in AD 70. For a fuller explanation of these three texts from a Preterist perspective, see the three books written by this author (Stevens Response To Gentry, Questions 5 About The Afterlife, and Expectations Demand A Rapture).

https://www.preteristarchive.com/Hyper/2002_stevens_rapture.html

In those books, we deal especially with the typological imagery of Christ's ascension into the cloud-filled heavenly Holy of Holies to present His own blood to make final atonement, and His "second appearance" back out of the heavenly temple to announce atonement to His anxiously waiting saints. The Acts 1:11 reference to the return of Christ is easy to apply to AD 70 when we realize it is speaking of the reverse of the visible ascent of Christ in Theophany form. His descent would follow the same Theophany pattern as His ascent, meaning that it would be visible like His departure. He ascended visibly with clouds and angels in the presence of a few disciples, and the two angels (Acts 1:10-11) promised that He would descend visibly "in like manner" in that same Theophany pattern to only those disciples whom He wished to see it. Both the going away and the return were "cloud comings" (Theophanies) accompanied by angels. He left the same way He would return (in clouds with the angels) to appear to his anxiously waiting disciples ("How long, O Lord?" and "O, our Lord, come!"). They expected His return before all of that generation died. Some of them were promised to remain alive until His return, and that they would literally "see" it before they all died (Matt. 16:27-28 and John 21:22f).

Even some partial preterists (e.g. Kenneth Gentry in his book, *Before Jerusalem Fell*) have agreed that Rev. 1:7 (which mentions a "cloud coming" or Theophany which "every eye would see") was fulfilled in AD 70. Since most expositors connect Rev. 1:7 with Acts 1:11, it seems reasonable to assign both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 to the visible Theophany that was seen by the Jewish people just before the war in AD 66. Notice what R. C. Sproul, Sr. said about the angelic appearances in the sky in AD 66 and its connection to Rev. 1:7 – "...theop Old Testament prophets, when speaking of a real historical visitation of God in judgment upon cities and nations, used exactly this kind of language in a metaphorical way to describe that coming of divine judgment.... As some 19th century scholars...Jonathan Edwards...B. B. Warfield and others have suggested, what Jesus is talking about here on the Mount of Olives [Matt. 24:3] ...is the end of the Jewish age. And that the coming that he's talking about, and that he's warning these contemporaries

about over and over again... that was coming on that generation...was the judgment of God that was coming on Jerusalem and the temple in the year 70 AD.... Was Jesus visible? Did “every eye see him” [Rev. 1:7] and all of that? No. Although, one of the weirdest passages you ever read in ancient history is the paragraph that is found in Josephus [Wars, Bk 6, Ch 5, Sect. 3]. I quote it in my book [The Last Days According to Jesus, p. 124]... After talking about some remarkable, astonishing celestial events that some people had reported, he said, “Besides these a few days after that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month Artemisius ...before the setting of the sun, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds....” ...The overwhelming testimony of the contemporaries (and he was there as an eyewitness) was that people did see something in the clouds. And what is it they saw? They saw chariots. Is that the first time the chariot throne of God is seen in the clouds over Palestine? What took Elijah to heaven? What were the whirling merkabahs [chariots] Ezekiel beheld? Was not the basic symbol in the Old Testament of the movable judgment throne of God, his chariots of fire? And here we have the testimony of many, many people saying they saw these chariots running about the clouds right before the end of Jerusalem. ...It lends credence to the further application of Jesus’ predictions of what would come in this judgment of the nation of Israel and of the city of Jerusalem...” [R. C. Sproul, Sr. “Last Days Madness” speech, 1999 Ligonier Ministries National Conference in Orlando. Bracketed material inserted by the author of this Foreword.]

Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, Bk 3, Ch 8, Section 5) quotes this same material from Josephus, and Tacitus (Histories, Book 5, “About The Jews”) alludes to the same events. Sproul’s comments stimulate several thoughts. If Rev. 1:7 was fulfilled by the appearance of angels and chariots in the sky at AD 66, and if Acts 1:11 is speaking of the same judgment coming (or cloud coming, Theophany) of Christ, then what text teaches a still future visible coming of Christ? If the angelic armies literally seen in the clouds at AD 66 were the fulfillment of “every eye shall see Him” (Rev. 1:7) as Sproul has allowed as a possibility, then it was also the fulfillment of Acts 1:11! In Matt 16:27-28, which R. C. Sproul, Sr. affirms is AD 70, it states that some of those disciples would not taste death until they saw Christ return. It therefore seems logical that the visible coming of Christ at AD 66-70 which is mentioned in Matt. 16:27-28 must be the same coming dealt with in both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11.

The commander of the angelic hosts (Christ) was present with His angelic armies on that occasion (AD 66), just like Rev. 19:11-21 pictures for us. This was the visible return of Christ with His angels to judge His enemies

and reward His saints, as both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 had predicted. Matt. 24:29-31 and Luke 21:25-28 also indicated there would be visible “signs” accompanying the return of Christ with His angels to raise the dead out of Hades, perform the judgment, and reward His faithful saints. This fulfills the “in like manner” terms of the Acts 1:11 text. Both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 fit the Matt. 16:27-28 “visibility” pattern.

It is also clear from the similarities between 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4 that these two “parousia” texts are speaking of the same AD 70 return of Christ. Since both texts state that the resurrection will occur in connection with the “parousia” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17), and since the NT does not distinguish between two different parousias separated by thousands of years, and since this parousia is said to occur in the lifetime of some who would “live and remain” until it occurred (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15), then it is clear that these two texts were fulfilled in AD 70. This forces some adjustment in our concepts about the nature of fulfillment once we get the time of fulfillment straightened out. All three of these difficult second coming texts have been explained from a consistent AD 70 fulfillment. This leaves partial preterists nowhere to hide. We can thank Russell for pointing the way toward this approach to these three texts.

A LITERAL RAPTURE

Another area in which Russell greatly served the interests of future generations was the rapture. Four other scholars within a generation of Russell also taught the idea of a literal rapture in AD 70 (Milton S. Terry, E. Hampden-Cook, Richard Weymouth, and William S. Urmy). There are minor differences in the way each of these men described it, but all agreed there was a removal of some true Christians in connection with the return of Christ in AD 70. Modern advocates of a literal AD 70 rapture (such as Garrett Brown, Walt Hibbard, Arthur Melanson, Ian Harding, Ed Stevens, and others) go further to assert that all true Christians (and nothing but true Christians) alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem were “snatched away” to be with Christ in the spiritual realm. Russell suggested that only some Christians were caught up – a “partial rapture” with the sleepers or unwatchful Christians left on earth. But it seems from Jesus’ sharp criticism of that group in Matthew 25 (and in the book of Revelation) that the sleepers or unwatchful were not true Christians. The tribulation and apostasy eliminated the insincere. By the time of the rapture the only watchful, awake, and “worthy ones” were the true Christians. There would have been few (if any) pretenders and “mere professing Christians.” So in either view, the group of saints actually raptured is basically the same, whether we see it as only the watchful Christians, or as true Christians only.

The arguments we all use to establish the necessity of a literal rapture in AD 70 are exactly the same. The strongest arguments are the Biblical “expectation statements.” Scripture alone is our standard, not scripture plus history, tradition or anything else. The only authoritative material that we can use to make any final decisions about what did or did not occur in AD 70 is the Bible. If it says the Parousia was going to occur in AD 70, that should be enough. We shouldn’t have to be convinced by history or any external arguments. If the text of scripture says something is going to occur within a certain time frame, then we are bound to believe it, regardless of whether we can find external historical or traditional support for it, and regardless of whether our credulity is stretched to the breaking point. The same thing happened in the field of archaeology in regard to the Hittites and Darius the Mede. The Bible was the only evidence we had for the existence of these people for a long time, yet that did not make advocates of sola scriptura doubt the veracity of the Bible. So for sincere believers, the question boils down to this: What did the NT writers believe, teach, and expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? Did they expect to experience the Parousia in any conscious way? Did they expect to “know” it had occurred afterwards? Or did they expect it to happen totally in the invisible realm without being consciously aware of it in any way? It is these Biblical “expectation statements” that also need to be examined, not just the “time statements.”

We Preterists have pressed Futurists with the “time statements,” and rightly so, because they are “sola scriptura” arguments. They are Biblical statements that need to be dealt with. So are the “expectation statements.” What the “time statements” do for Preterism in general, the “expectation statements” do for the rapture view in particular. The time statements nail down the “time” of the parousia and its related events, while the expectation statements reveal the content and “nature” of those events in the experience of the Church.

Just because the Parousia may not have been validated historically in the way some might have preferred, it never stopped us from seeing it as a fulfilled “fact.” The “time statements” forced us to believe that it must have occurred, regardless of a lack of historical confirmation. Even if we are unable to find external historical proof for a literal rapture in AD 70, it does not invalidate the Bible’s affirmation of it. Our concern is simply, “What does Scripture actually teach?”

Rapture advocates have been accused of teaching a rapture based only on external historical “arguments from silence.” Not so! Scripture is the driving force. The expectation statements are Biblical arguments, just like the time statements. The time statements help establish the time of fulfillment,

while the expectation statements help determine the nature of fulfillment. As you study the following list of Biblical passages, find the answers to these two questions: (1) What does Jesus say is actually going to be seen and experienced by His saints at the Parousia? (2) What do the NT writers and pre-70 Christians indicate that they were expecting to actually see and experience at the Parousia? (Matt. 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:31; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2:1; and 1 Jn. 3:2). These texts show clearly what the first century Church expected to experience at the Parousia.

Paul said that when Christ would come to cast His enemies “away from His presence” and gather His saints (2 Thess. 1:6–2:1), that the saints would “marvel at Him” in His presence and in the presence of all who have believed, and Christ would be glorified by their collective presence with Him “on that day.” That doesn’t sound like a very silent occasion to me. Did they fail to “recognize the time of His visitation” and remain silent (as if it had not occurred). They should have been celebrating and proclaiming the fulfillment of His Parousia (if they were still around). There is a strange silence here, at the very time when we would have expected anything but silence, when they said they would be marveling at Christ in His presence. Their silence does not match their expectations, unless they were doing those things in the heavenly realm (no longer on the earthly scene).

If all living Christians remained on earth after AD 70, why didn’t some of those who saw these incredible events in AD 70 say something about it? Why the silence, if they were still around? Russell and the other four scholars mentioned above proposed the literal rapture to explain that silence. Silence is not a significant argument all by itself. But as Sherlock Holmes would agree in the case of the dog that didn’t bark when a supposed outsider broke in, sometimes silence is significant, especially when the circumstances would force us to expect otherwise. Expectations demand our attention even in the case of silence, if the Bible clearly teaches us to expect something other than silence. And it does.

For more indepth studies of the rapture at the parousia in AD 66-70, see this author’s book entitled, *Expectations Demand A Rapture*, and the excellent series of articles written by Ian Harding.

THE MILLENNIUM

Russell was uncomfortable with any view of the Millennium which ended at AD 70 (p. 514). He considered such a short duration of the millennium (40 years or less) to be “so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it” (p. 514). He suggested the millennium only began at AD 70 with a limited

“first” resurrection and judgment (of the righteous only), and is still ongoing in history and moving toward a yet future final resurrection and judgment of the rest of the dead (the wicked only – p. 518). It seemed to him that the Millennium was “introduced parenthetically” as an exception to the AD 70 time limits of the rest of the book (p. 514).

He noted that some people (such as myself) consider the idea of a Millennium after AD 70 as challenging the imminent time indicators throughout the book of Revelation. We would prefer a 40-year millennium (AD 30-70) which stays within those time limits.

Russell places a flashback to AD 70 at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), so that the white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11ff takes place in AD 70. Preterists who take the 40-year approach cannot disallow his flashback, since we insert one at the beginning of the millennium.

Russell’s millennium interpretation deserves careful consideration. He acknowledged his understanding of it might not be perfect, and held out the hope that succeeding generations “will soon correct what is proved to be erroneous, and confirm what is shown to be right.” (p. 535)

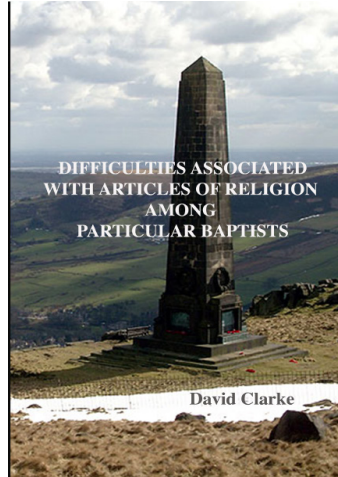
In conclusion, I have to repeat how impressed I am with Russell’s exegetical work here. Many thousands of Bible students all over the world have been, and will continue to be, blessed by this book. We send this reprint forth with strong encouragement to seriously and objectively consider everything he has to say, and to “search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so.” (Acts 17:11)

Edward E. Stevens

Bradford, Pennsylvania July, 2003

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH ARTICLES OF RELIGION

Among Particular Baptists



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his own experience with articles of religion he has compiled Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831, of which he is the sole surviving member, the First London Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

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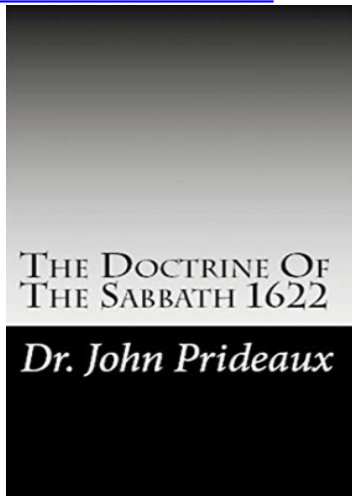
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[THE DOCTRINE OF THE SABBATH 1622](#)



by John Prideaux (Author)

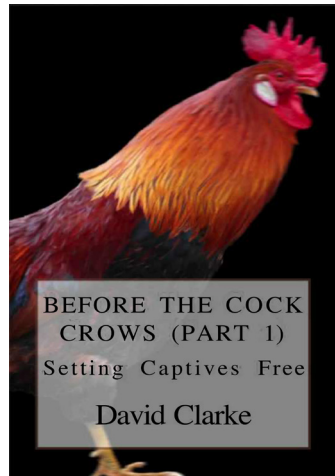
Of all the controverts which have exercised the Church of Christ, there is none more ancient than that of the Sabbath: So ancient that it took beginning even in the infancy of the Church, and grew up with it. For as we read in the Acts There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the people, and to command them to keep

the law of Moses; whereof the Sabbath was apart: Which in the general, as the apostles labours to suppress in their first General Council, held in Jerusalem: So did S. Paul, upon occasion of whose ministry this controversy first began, endeavor what he could against the particular, shapely reproving those which hallowed yet the Jewish Sabbath and observed days, and months, and times, as if he had bestowed his labor in vain upon them. But more particularly in his epistle to the Colossians, Let no man judge you in respect of a holy day or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which were a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ. Both which expressions of Paul are in this following discourse produced to this very purpose. Yet notwithstanding all this care both generally of the Apostles and more especially of Paul to suppress this error; it grew up still and had its patrons and abettors.

This reproduction of, 'The doctrine of the Sabbath', by Dr. John Prideaux has been presented for those who have been troubled by the insistence of those religious people who insist that the first day of the week is the Sabbath day and to be kept holy, as dictated by the law of Moses. It is not. We include also Dr. John Gill on the subject of the circumstances of public worship as to place and time. It is the view of this publisher that the time and place of Christian worship it is a matter for the Christian community to decide and is not legislated in the scriptures.

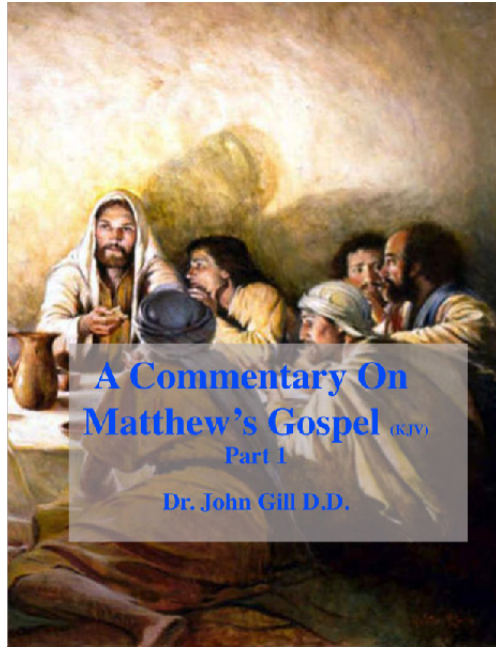
[BEFORE THE COCK CROWS PART 1](#)

The Daily Diary Of Trojan Horse International: Volume 1



David Clarke the Director of Trojan Horse International CM encountered remarkable opposition from various quarters in New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa City Philippines between October 2002 and July 2003. Most of those who opposed the mission were men from among Asia's most notorious

criminals in the National Penitentiary, which is situated on the Reservation at Muntinlupa City, 1770, Philippines. If one were to judge the success of the mission by that amount of opposition that it experienced, then the mission was a remarkable success. Newton stated that to every force there is an equal but opposite one to oppose it and like Newton, David suggests that to every proactive work there is an equal but opposite reaction and so if this reaction were to be the measure of success, then the mission was remarkably successful. It also serves to demonstrate that God always triumphs. That God saves, not by might, but by His Spirit. That God puts to fight thousands of his enemies and empowers the one's and two's, that trust in Him in order to show that Salvation is truly of the Lord. This prison comprises of three Compounds and penal farms housing over 23,550 inmates, which are all under the control of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Corrections. (BUCOR). The Chaplaincy, headed by Msgr. Helley Barrido, is responsible for all religious groups and voluntary work done within the Prison. "Death Row" is in the Maximum Security Compound where over 1200 men are housed and they are all under the sentence of death. Some are doubly confirmed and due to be put to death by lethal injection. Trojan Horse International C.M. was established in the early part of 2001 and composed of a team of two from England, David Clarke and Gordon John Smith. The mission was set up as a Christian ministry, seeking to bring assistance to Michael John Clarke, David's older brother, and many inmates at the Prison. This was where Michael had been incarcerated, for a crime he did not commit, and was serving a prison sentence of 16 years. He had been baptized as a Christian. In an old 45-gallon US Oil drum, on the 16th September 2000 in the Maximum Compound. Michael, like his brother David, had been converted from crime to Christ whilst suffering the bitter effects of this form of injustice in the Philippines. However Michael's conversion was some thirty years after David who had been brought up in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and had been converted from crime to Christ, at the age of 20 years old, on the 16th January 1970.

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

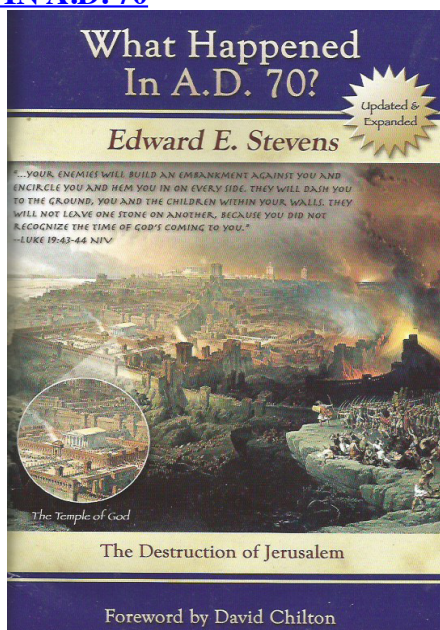
Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16.

And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A.D. 70

Ed Stevens

This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a consistent view which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more conservative on most other issues than traditional views. And there is no compromise of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {audience relevance). Two thousand yeas from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of “American English” to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple

language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

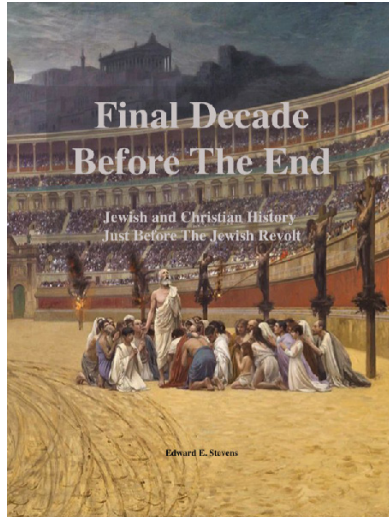
Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed futurist interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

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April 17,2010

FINAL DECADE BEFORE THE END



Ed Stevens

Introduction

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell's view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all

the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

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