

THE BOOK OF MICAH

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

MICAH was a native of Moresheth, not the same as Mareshah in ^{<300E>}Micah 1:15, but the town called Moresheth-gath (^{<300E>}Micah 1:14), which lay near Eleutheropolis, west of Jerusalem, on the border of the Philistine country; so called to distinguish it from Moresheth of Judah. His full name is *Micaiah* (not the Micaiah mentioned ^{<1218>}1 Kings 22:8, the son of Imlah), signifying, *Who is like Jehovah?* The time of his prophesying is stated in the introduction to be in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, that is, between 757 and 699 B.C. Jeremiah (^{<2038>}Jeremiah 26:18) quotes ^{<3012>}Micah 3:12, as delivered in the reign of Hezekiah. He was thus a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. The idolatries practiced in the reign of Ahaz accord with Micah's denunciations of such gross evils, and confirm the truth of the time assigned ^{<300E>}Micah 1:1. His prophecies are partly against Israel (Samaria), partly against Judah. As Samaria, Israel's metropolis, was taken first, and Jerusalem, the capital of Judah subsequently, in the introductory heading, ^{<300E>}Micah 1:1, *Samaria* is put first, then *Jerusalem*. He prophesies the capture of both; the Jews captivity and restoration; and the coming and reign of Messiah. His style is full, round, and perspicuous; his diction pure, and his parallelisms regular. His description of Jehovah (^{<3078>}Micah 7:18,19) is not surpassed by any elsewhere in Scripture. The similarity between Isaiah and Micah in some passages (compare ^{<300E>}Micah 4:1-3, with ^{<201E>}Isaiah 2:2-4) is to be accounted for by their being contemporaries, acquainted with each other's inspired writings, and having the same subjects for their theme. HENGSTENBERG maintains that the passage in Micah is the original. Isaiah was somewhat the older, being a prophet in the reign of Uzziah, Jotham's predecessor, whereas Micah began his prophecies under Jotham.

The book consists of two parts:

- (1) the first through fifth chapters;

(2) the sixth and seventh chapters, a dialogue or contestation between Jehovah and His people, in which He reproaches them with their unnatural and ungrateful conduct, and threatens judgment for their corruptions, but consoles them with the promise of restoration from captivity.

Micah stands sixth of the minor prophets in the *Hebrew* canon, but third in the *Septuagint*.

CHAPTER 1

⋈ MICAH 1:1-16.

GOD'S WRATH AGAINST SAMARIA AND JUDAH; THE FORMER IS TO BE OVERTHROWN; SUCH JUDGMENTS IN PROSPECT CALL FOR MOURNING.

2. *all that therein is* — *Hebrew*, “whatever fills it.” Micaiah, son of Imlah, begins his prophecy similarly, “Hearken, O people, every one of you.” Micah designedly uses the same preface, implying that his ministrations are a continuation of his predecessor’s of the same name. Both probably had before their mind Moses’ similar attestation of heaven and earth in a like case (⋈ Deuteronomy 31:28 32:1; compare ⋈ Isaiah 1:2).

God be witness against you — namely, that none of you can say, when the time of your punishment shall come, that you were not forewarned. The punishment denounced is stated in ⋈ Micah 1:3, etc.

from his holy temple — that is, heaven (⋈ 1 Kings 8:30 ⋈ Psalm 11:4 Jon 2:7; compare ⋈ Romans 1:18).

3. *tread upon the high places of the earth* — He shall destroy the fortified heights (compare ⋈ Deuteronomy 32:13 33:29) [GROTIUS].

4. Imagery from earthquakes and volcanic agency, to describe the terrors which attend Jehovah’s coming in judgment (compare ⋈ Judges 5:5). Neither men of high degree, as the mountains, nor men of low degree, as the valleys, can secure themselves or their land from the judgments of God.

as wax — (⋈ Psalm 97:5; compare ⋈ Isaiah 64:1-3). The third clause, “as wax,” etc.; answers to the first in the parallelism, “the mountains shall be molten”; the fourth, “as the waters,” etc.; to the second, “the valleys shall be cleft.” As wax melts by fire, so the mountains before God, at His approach; and as waters poured down a steep cannot stand but are diffused abroad, so the valleys shall be cleft before Jehovah.

5. *For the transgression of Jacob is all this* — All these terrors attending Jehovah’s coming are caused by the sins of Jacob or Israel, that is, the whole people.

What is the transgression of Jacob? — Taking up the question often in the mouths of the people when reproved, “What is our transgression?” (compare Malachi 1:6,7), He answers, Is it not Samaria? Is not that city (the seat of the calf-worship) the cause of Jacob’s apostasy (^{<1146>}1 Kings 14:16 15:26,34 16:13,19,25,30)?

and what are the high places of Judah? — What city is the cause of the idolatries on the high places of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem (compare ^{<1204>}2 Kings 18:4)?

6. Samaria’s punishment is mentioned first, as it was to fall before Jerusalem.

as an heap of the field — (^{<382>}Micah 3:12). Such a heap of stones and rubbish as is gathered out of fields, to clear them (^{<2821>}Hosea 12:11). Palestine is of a soil abounding in stones, which are gathered out before the vines are planted (^{<2182>}Isaiah 5:2).

as plantings of a vineyard — as a place where vines are planted. Vineyards were cultivated on the sides of hills exposed to the sun. The hill on which Samaria was built by Omri, had been, doubtless, planted with vines originally; now it is to be reduced again to its original state (^{<1163>}1 Kings 16:24).

pour down — *dash down* the stones of the city into the valley beneath. A graphic picture of the present appearance of the ruins, which is as though “the buildings of the ancient city had been thrown down from the brow of the hill” [*Scottish Mission of Inquiry*, pp. 293,294].

discover the foundations — destroy it so utterly as to lay bare its foundations (^{<2634>}Ezekiel 13:14). Samaria was destroyed by Shalmaneser.

7. ***all the hires*** — the wealth which Israel boasted of receiving from her idols as the “rewards” or “hire” for worshipping them (^{<305>}Hosea 2:5,12).

idols ... will I ... desolate — that is, give them up to the foe to strip off the silver and gold with which they are overlaid.

she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot — Israel gathered (made for herself) her idols from the gold and silver received from false gods, as she thought, the “hire” of her worshipping them; and they shall again become what they had been before, the hire of spiritual harlotry, that is, the prosperity of the foe, who also being worshippers of idols will ascribe the acquisition to their idols [MAURER]. GROTIUS explains it, *The offerings sent to Israel’s temple by the Assyrians*, whose idolatry Israel adopted, shall go back to the Assyrians,

her teachers in idolatry, as the hire or *fee for having taught it*. The image of a *harlot's hire* for the supposed temporal reward of spiritual fornication, is more common in Scripture (^{<2300>}Hosea 9:1).

8. *Therefore I will wail* — The prophet first shows how the coming judgment affects himself, in order that he might affect the minds of his countrymen similarly.

stripped — that is, *of shoes, or sandals*, as the *Septuagint* translates. Otherwise “naked” would be a tautology.

naked — “Naked” means *divested of the upper garment* (^{<2310>}Isaiah 20:2). “Naked and barefoot,” the sign of mourning (^{<1053>}2 Samuel 15:30). The prophet’s upper garment was usually rough and coarse-haired (^{<1200>}2 Kings 1:8 Zechariah 13:4).

like the dragons — so JEROME. Rather, “the wild dogs,” jackals or wolves, which wail like an infant when in distress or alone [MAURER]. (See on ^{<310>}Job 30:29).

owls — rather, “ostriches,” which give a shrill and long-drawn, sigh-like cry, especially at night.

9. *wound ... incurable* — Her case, politically and morally, is desperate (^{<2402>}Jeremiah 8:22).

it is come — the wound, or impending calamity (compare ^{<2303>}Isaiah 10:28).

he is come ... even to Jerusalem — The evil is no longer limited to Israel. The prophet foresees Sennacherib coming even “to the gate” of the principal city. The use of “it” and “he” is appropriately distinct. “It,” the calamity, “came unto” Judah, many of the inhabitants of which suffered, but did not reach the citizens of Jerusalem, “the gate” of which the foe (“he”) “came unto,” but did not enter (^{<2301>}Isaiah 36:1;37:33-37).

10. *Declare ye it not at Gath* — on the borders of Judea, one of the five cities of the Philistines, who would exult at the calamity of the Hebrews (^{<3013>}2 Samuel 1:20). Gratify not those who exult over the falls of the Israel of God.

weep ye not at all — Do not betray your inward sorrow by outward weeping, within the cognizance of the enemy, lest they should exult at it. RELAND translates, “Weep not *in Acco*,” that is, Ptolemais, now St. Jean d’Acre, near the foot of Mount Carmel; allotted to Asher, but never occupied by that tribe (^{<1003>}Judges 1:31); Acco’s inhabitants would, therefore, like Gath’s, rejoice at Israel’s disaster. Thus the parallelism is

best carried out in all the three clauses of the verse, and there is a similar play on sounds in each, in the *Hebrew Gath*, resembling in sound the *Hebrew* for “declare”; *Acco*, resembling the *Hebrew* for “weep”; and *Aphrah*, meaning “dust.” While the Hebrews were not to expose their misery to foreigners, they ought to bewail it in their own cities, for example, Aphrah or Ophrah (⁴⁶⁸²³Joshua 18:23 ⁴⁹³⁷¹1 Samuel 13:17), in the tribe of Benjamin. To “roll in the dust” marked deep sorrow (²⁴⁶³⁶Jeremiah 6:26 ²⁵⁷³⁰Ezekiel 27:30).

11. *Pass ye away* — that is, Thou shall go into captivity.

inhabitant of Saphir — a village amidst the hills of Judah, between Eleutheropolis and Ascalon, called so, from the *Hebrew* word for “beauty.” Though thy name be “beauty,” which heretofore was thy characteristic, thou shalt have thy “shame” made “naked.” This city shall be dismantled of its walls, which are the garments, as it were, of cities; its citizens also shall be hurried into captivity, with persons exposed (²³⁰⁷⁸Isaiah 47:3 ²³⁶⁷⁰Ezekiel 16:37 ²³²¹⁰Hosea 2:10).

the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth — Its inhabitants did not come forth to console the people of Beth-ezel in their mourning, because the calamity was universal; none was exempt from it (compare ²³⁰²⁵Jeremiah 6:25). “Zaanan” is the same as Zenan, in Judah (⁴⁶⁸⁵⁷Joshua 15:37), meaning the “place of flocks.” The form of the name used is made like the *Hebrew* for “came forth.” Though in name seeming to imply that thou dost *come forth*, thou “camest not forth.”

Beth-ezel — perhaps Azal (Zechariah 14:5), near Jerusalem. It means a “house on the side,” or “near.” Though *so near*, as its name implies, to Zaanan, Beth-ezel received no succor or sympathy from Zaanan.

he shall receive of you his standing — “he,” that is, the foe; “his standing,” that is, his sustenance [PISCATOR]. Or, “he shall be caused a delay by you, Zaanan.” He shall be brought to a stand for a time in besieging you; hence it is said just before, “Zaanan came not forth,” that is, shut herself up within her walls to withstand a siege. But it was only for a time. She, too, fell like Beth-ezel before her [VATABLUS]. MAURER construes thus: “The inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth; the mourning of Beth-ezel *takes away from you* her shelter.” Though Beth-ezel be *at your side* (that is, near), according to her name, yet as she also mourns under the oppression of the foe, she cannot give you shelter, or be *at your side* as a helper (as her name might lead you to expect), if you come forth and be intercepted by him from returning to Zaanan.

12. *Maroth* — possibly the same as Maarath (^{<0159>}Joshua 15:59). Perhaps a different town, lying between the previously mentioned towns and the capital, and one of those plundered by Rab-shakeh on his way to it.

waited carefully for good — that is, for better fortune, but in vain [CALVIN]. GESENIUS translates, “*is grieved* for her goods,” “taken away” from her. This accords with the meaning of Maroth, “bitterness,” to which allusion is made in “*is grieved.*” But the antithesis favors *English Version*, “waited carefully (that is, anxiously) for *good*, but *evil* came down.”

from the Lord — not from *chance*.

unto the gate of Jerusalem — after the other cities of Judah have been taken.

13. “Bind the chariot to the swift *steed*,” in order by a hasty flight to escape the invading foe. Compare *Note*, see on ^{<2301>}Isaiah 36:2, on “Lachish,” at which Sennacherib fixed his headquarters (^{<1294>}2 Kings 18:14,17 ^{<3617>}Jeremiah 34:7).

she is the beginning of the sin to ... Zion — Lachish was the first of the cities of Judah, according to this passage, to introduce the worship of false gods, imitating what Jeroboam had introduced in Israel. As lying near the border of the north kingdom, Lachish was first to be infected by its idolatry, which thence spread to Jerusalem.

14. *shalt thou give presents to Moresheth-gath* — that its inhabitants may send thee help. MAURER explains it, “thou shalt give a writing of renunciation to Moresheth-gath,” that is, thou shalt renounce all claim to it, being compelled to yield it up to the foe. “Thou,” that is, Judah. “Israel” in this verse is used for the kingdom of *Judah*, which was the chief representative of the whole nation of Israel. Moresheth-gath is so called because it had fallen for a time under the power of the neighboring Philistines of *Gath*. It was the native town of Micah (^{<3001>}Micah 1:1).

Achzib — meaning “lying.” Achzib, as its name implies, shall prove a “lie to ... Israel,” that is, shall disappoint Israel’s hopes of succor from her (compare ^{<8165>}Job 6:15-20 ^{<21518>}Jeremiah 15:18). Achzib was in Judah between Keilah and Mareshah (^{<0154>}Joshua 15:44). Perhaps the same as Chezib (^{<0185>}Genesis 38:5).

15. *Yet will I bring an heir unto thee* — rather, “*the heir.*” As thou art now occupied by possessors who expelled the former inhabitants, so will I bring “yet” again *the new possessor*, namely, the Assyrian foe. Other heirs will supplant us in every inheritance but that of heaven. There is a play upon

the meaning of Mareshah, “an inheritance”: there shall come the new *heir* of the *inheritance*.

Adullam the glory of Israel — so called as being superior in situation; when it and the neighboring cities fell, Israel’s glory was gone. MAURER, as the *Margin*, translates, “the glory of Israel” (her chief citizens: answering to “thy delicate children,” Micah 1: 16) “shall come in flight to Adullam.” *English Version* better preserves the parallelism, “the heir” in the first clause answering to “he” in the second.

16. *Make thee bald*, etc. — a token of deep mourning (⁻¹⁹⁰⁸Ezra 9:3 ⁻¹⁹⁰⁹Job 1:20). Mourn, O land, for thy darling children.

poll — shave off thy hair.

enlarge thy baldness — Mourn grievously. The land is compared to a mother weeping for her children.

as the eagle — the bald eagle, or the dark-winged vulture. In the moulting season all eagles are comparatively bald (compare ⁻¹⁹³⁶Psalm 103:5).

CHAPTER 2

⋈ MICAH 2:1-13.

DENUNCIATION OF THE EVILS PREVALENT: THE PEOPLE'S UNWILLINGNESS TO HEAR THE TRUTH: THEIR EXPULSION FROM THE LAND THE FITTING FRUIT OF THEIR SIN: YET JUDAH AND ISRAEL ARE HEREAFTER TO BE RESTORED.

1. *devise ... work ... practice* — They do evil not merely on a sudden impulse, but with deliberate design. As in the former chapter sins against the first table are reprov'd, so in this chapter sins against the second table. A gradation: “devise” is the *conception* of the evil purpose; “work” ([⋈]Psalm 58:2), or “fabricate,” the *maturing* of the scheme; “practice,” or “effect,” the *execution* of it.

because it is in the power of their hand — for the phrase see [⋈]Genesis 31:29 [⋈]Proverbs 3:27. Might, not right, is what regulates their conduct. Where they can, they commit oppression; where they do not, it is because they cannot.

2. Parallelism, “Take by violence,” answers to “take away”; “fields” and “houses,” to “house” and “heritage” (that is, one’s land).

3. *against this family* — against the nation, and especially against those reprobates in [⋈]Micah 2:1,2.

I devise an evil — a happy antithesis between God’s dealings and the Jews dealings ([⋈]Micah 2:1). Ye “devise evil” against your fellow countrymen; I devise evil against you. Ye devise it wrongfully, I by righteous retribution in kind.

from which ye shall not remove your necks — as ye have done from the law. The yoke I shall impose shall be one which ye cannot shake off. They who will not bend to God’s “easy yoke” ([⋈]Matthew 11:29,30), shall feel His iron yoke.

go haughtily — (Compare Note, see on [⋈]Jeremiah 6:28). Ye shall not walk as now with neck haughtily uplifted, for the yoke shall press down your “neck.”

this time is evil — rather, “for *that* time shall be an evil time,” namely, the time of the carrying away into captivity (compare ^{<30B>}Amos 5:13 ^{<41B>}Ephesians 5:16).

4. *one take up a parable against you* — that is, Some of your foes shall do so, taking in derision from your own mouth your “lamentation,” namely, “We be spoiled,” etc.

lament with a doleful lamentation — literally, “lament with a lamentation of lamentations.” *Hebrew, naha, nehi, niyah*, the repetition representing the continuous and monotonous wail.

he hath changed the portion of my people — a charge of injustice against Jehovah. He transfers to other nations the sacred territory assigned as the rightful portion of our people (^{<30B>}Micah 1:15).

turning away he hath divided our fields — Turning away from us to the enemy, He hath divided among them our fields. CALVIN, as the *Margin*, explains, “*Instead of restoring* our territory, He hath divided our fields among our enemies, each of whom henceforward will have an interest in keeping what he hath gotten: so that we are utterly shut out from hope of restoration.” MAURER translates as a noun, “He hath divided our fields *to a rebel*,” that is, to the foe who is a rebel against the true God, and a worshipper of idols. So “backsliding,” that is, backslider (^{<34B>}Jeremiah 49:4). *English Version* gives a good sense; and is quite tenable in the *Hebrew*.

5. *Therefore* — resumed from ^{<30B>}Micah 2:3. On account of your crimes described in ^{<31B>}Micah 2:1,2.

thou — the ideal individual (“me,” ^{<31B>}Micah 2:4), representing the guilty people in whose name he spoke.

none that ... cast a cord by lot — none who shall have any possession *measured out*.

in the congregation of the Lord — among the people consecrated to Jehovah. By covetousness and violence (^{<31B>}Micah 2:2) they had forfeited “the portion of Jehovah’s people.” This is God’s implied answer to their complaint of injustice (^{<31B>}Micah 2:4).

6. *Prophesy ye not, say they* — namely, the Israelites say to the true prophets, when announcing unwelcome truths. Therefore God judicially abandons them to their own ways: “The prophets, by whose ministry they might have been saved from *shame* (ignominious captivity), shall not (that is, no longer) prophesy to them” (^{<33B>}Isaiah 30:10 ^{<31B>}Amos 2:12 7:16).

MAURER translates the latter clause, “they shall not prophesy of *such things*” (as in ^{<318B>}Micah 2:3-5, these being rebellious Israel’s words); “let them not prophesy”; “they never cease from insult” (from prophesying insults to us). *English Version* is supported by the parallelism: wherein the similarity of sound and word implies how exactly God makes their punishment answer to their sin, and takes them at their own word. “Prophesy,” literally, “drop” (^{<631B>}Deuteronomy 32:2 ^{<320C>}Ezekiel 21:2).

7. *O thou ... named the house of Jacob* — priding thyself on the *name*, though having naught of the spirit, of thy progenitor. Also, bearing the name which ought to remind thee of God’s favors granted to thee because of His covenant with Jacob.

is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? — Is His *compassion* contracted within narrower limits now than formerly, so that He should delight in your destruction (compare ^{<570B>}Psalm 77:7-9 ^{<251C>}Isaiah 59:1,2)?

are these his doings? — that is, Are such threatenings His delight? Ye dislike the prophets’ threatenings (^{<318B>}Micah 2:6):but who is to blame? Not God, for He delights in blessing, rather than threatening; but yourselves (^{<318B>}Micah 2:8) who provoke His threatenings [GROTIUS]. CALVIN translates, “Are your doings such as are prescribed by Him?” Ye boast of being God’s peculiar people: Do ye then conform your lives to God’s law?

do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly — Are not My words good to the upright? If your ways were upright, My words would not be threatening (compare ^{<983B>}Psalm 18:26 ^{<1119B>}Matthew 11:19 ^{<1077B>}John 7:17).

8. Your ways are not such that I can deal with you as I would with the upright.

Even of late — literally, “yesterday,” “long ago.” So “of old.” *Hebrew*, “yesterday” (^{<231B>}Isaiah 30:33); “heretofore,” *Hebrew*, “since yesterday” (^{<118B>}Joshua 3:4).

my people is risen up as an enemy — that is, has rebelled against My precepts; also has become *an enemy* to the unoffending passers-by.

robe with the garment — Not content with the outer “garment,” ye greedily rob passers-by of the ornamental “robe” fitting the body closely and flowing down to the feet [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU] (^{<165C>}Matthew 5:40).

as men averse from war — in antithesis to (*My people*) “as an enemy.” Israel treats the innocent passers-by, though “averse from war,” as an enemy” would treat captives in his power, stripping them of their

habiliments as lawful spoils. GROTIUS translates, “as men *returning* from war,” that is, as captives over whom the right of war gives the victors an absolute power. *English Version* is supported by the antithesis.

9. *The women of my people* — that is, the *widows* of the men slain by you (^{<3100>}Micah 2:2) ye cast out from their homes which had been their delight, and seize on them for yourselves.

from their children — that is, from the orphans of the widows.

taken away my glory — namely, their substance and raiment, which, being the fruit of God’s blessing on the young, reflected *God’s glory*. Thus Israel’s crime was not merely robbery, but sacrilege. Their sex did not save the women, nor their age the children from violence.

for ever — There was no repentance. They persevered in sin. The pledged garment was to be restored to the poor before sunset (^{<1022>}Exodus 22:26,27); but these *never* restored their unlawful booty.

10. *Arise ye, and depart* — not an exhortation to the children of God to depart out of an ungodly world, as it is often applied; though that sentiment is a scriptural one. This world is doubtless not our “rest,” being “polluted” with sin: it is our passage, not our portion; our aim, not our home (^{<4017>}2 Corinthians 6:17 ^{<3834>}Hebrews 13:14). The imperatives express the *certainty* of the *future* event *predicted*. “Since such are your doings (compare ^{<3100>}Micah 2:7,8, etc.), My sentence on you is irrevocable (^{<3100>}Micah 2:4,5), however distasteful to you (^{<3100>}Micah 2:6); ye who have *cast out* others from their homes and possessions (^{<3100>}Micah 2:2,8,9) must *arise, depart*, and be cast out of your own (^{<3100>}Micah 2:4,5): *for this is not your rest*” (^{<4013>}Numbers 10:33 ^{<6119>}Deuteronomy 12:9 ^{<4951>}Psalm 95:11). Canaan was designed to be a *rest* to them after their wilderness fatigues. But it is to be so no longer. Thus God refutes the people’s self-confidence, as if God were bound to them inseparably. The promise (^{<4924>}Psalm 132:14) is quite consistent with temporary withdrawal of God from Israel for their sins.

it shall destroy you — *The land* shall spew you out, because of the defilements wherewith ye “polluted” it (^{<4885>}Leviticus 18:25,28 ^{<3100>}Jeremiah 3:2 ^{<4012>}Ezekiel 36:12-14).

11. *walking in the spirit* — The *Hebrew* means also “wind.” “If a man professing to have the ‘spirit’ of inspiration (^{<2433>}Ezekiel 13:3; so ‘man of the spirit,’ that is, one claiming inspiration, ^{<3100>}Hosea 9:7), but really walking in ‘wind’ (prophecy void of nutriment for the soul, and unsubstantial as the *wind*) and falsehood, do lie, saying (that which ye like to hear), I will prophesy,” etc., even such a one, however false his prophecies, since he

flatters your wishes, shall be your prophet (compare ^{<3116>}Micah 2:6 ^{<3151>}Jeremiah 5:31).

prophesy ... of wine — that is, of an abundant supply of wine.

12. A sudden transition from threats to the promise of a glorious restoration. Compare a similar transition in ^{<3009>}Hosea 1:9,10. Jehovah, too, prophesies of good things to come, but not like the false prophets, “of wine and strong drink” (^{<3111>}Micah 2:11). After I have sent you into captivity as I have just threatened, I will thence assemble you again (compare ^{<3106>}Micah 4:6,7).

all of thee — The restoration from Babylon was partial. Therefore that here meant must be still future, when “*all* Israel shall be saved” (^{<6128>}Romans 11:26). The restoration from “Babylon” (specified (^{<3104>}Micah 4:10) is the type of the future one.

Jacob ... Israel — the ten tribes’ kingdom (^{<3112>}Hosea 12:2) and Judah (^{<4008>}2 Chronicles 19:8 21:2,4).

remnant — the elect remnant, which shall survive the previous calamities of Judah, and from which the nation is to spring into new life (^{<2033>}Isaiah 6:13 10:20-22).

as the sheep of Bozrah — a region famed for its rich pastures (compare ^{<1002>}2 Kings 3:4). GESENIUS for Bozrah translates, “sheepfold.” But thus there will be tautology unless the next clause be translated, “in the midst of their *pasture*.” *English Version* is more favored by the *Hebrew*.

13. The breaker — Jehovah-Messiah, who *breaks* through every obstacle in the way of their restoration: not as formerly *breaking forth* to destroy them for transgression (^{<10922>}Exodus 19:22 ^{<07153>}Judges 21:15), but breaking a way for them through their enemies.

they — the returning Israelites and Jews.

passed through the gate — that is, through the gate of the foe’s city in which they had been captives. So the image of the resurrection (^{<3134>}Hosea 13:14) represents Israel’s restoration.

their king — “the Breaker,” peculiarly “*their* king” (^{<3005>}Hosea 3:5 ^{<1237>}Matthew 27:37).

pass before them — as He did when they went up out of Egypt (^{<10321>}Exodus 13:21 ^{<1033>}Deuteronomy 1:30,33).

the Lord on the head of them — Jehovah at their head (²⁵¹²Isaiah 52:12).
Messiah, the second person, is meant (compare ¹²³¹Exodus 23:20 33:14
²³¹⁹Isaiah 63:9).

CHAPTER 3

⋈ MICAH 3:1-12.

THE SINS OF THE PRINCES, PROPHETS, AND PRIESTS: THE CONSEQUENT DESOLATION OF ZION.

1. *princes* — magistrates or judges.

Is it not for you? — Is it not your special function (⋈ Jeremiah 5:4,5)?

judgment — justice. Ye sit in judgment on others; surely then ye ought to know the judgment for injustice which awaits yourselves (⋈ Romans 2:1).

2. *pluck off their skin ... flesh* — rob their fellow countrymen of all their substance (⋈ Psalm 14:4 ⋈ Proverbs 30:14).

3. *pot ... flesh within ... caldron* — manifold species of cruel oppressions. Compare ⋈ Ezekiel 24:3, etc., containing, as to the coming punishment, the same figure as is here used of the sin: implying that the sin and punishment exactly correspond.

4. *Then* — at the time of judgment, which Micah takes for granted, so certain is it (compare ⋈ Micah 2:3).

they cry ... but he will not hear — just as those oppressed by them had formerly cried, and they would not hear. Their prayer shall be rejected, because it is the mere cry of nature for deliverance from pain, not that of repentance for deliverance from sin.

ill in their doings — Men cannot expect to do ill and fare well.

5. Here he attacks the false prophets, as before he had attacked the “princes.”

make my people err — knowingly mislead My people by not denouncing their sins as incurring judgment.

bite with ... teeth, and cry, Peace — that is, who, so long as they are supplied with food, promise *peace* and prosperity in their prophecies.

he that putteth not into their mouths, they ... prepare war against him — Whenever they are not supplied with food, they foretell war and calamity.

prepare war — literally, “sanctify war,” that is, proclaim it as a *holy* judgment of God because they are not fed (see on ^{<2466>}Jeremiah 6:4; compare ^{<2318>}Isaiah 13:3 ^{<2914>}Joel 1:14).

6. night ... dark — Calamities shall press on you so overwhelming as to compel you to cease pretending to *divine* (Zechariah 13:4). Darkness is often the image of calamity (^{<2382>}Isaiah 8:22 ^{<2158>}Amos 5:18 8:9).

7. cover their lips — The Orientals prided themselves on the moustache and beard (“upper lip,” *Margin*). To *cover* it, therefore, was a token of shame and sorrow (^{<1835>}Leviticus 13:45 ^{<2417>}Ezekiel 24:17,22). “They shall be so ashamed of themselves as *not to dare to open their mouths* or boast of the name of prophet” [CALVIN].

there is no answer of God — They shall no more profess to have responses from God, being struck dumb with calamities (^{<3106>}Micah 3:6).

8. I — in contrast to the false prophets (^{<3105>}Micah 3:5,7).

full of power — that which “the Spirit of Jehovah” imparts for the discharge of the prophetic function (^{<4017>}Luke 1:17 24:49 ^{<4008>}Acts 1:8).

judgment — a sense of *justice* [MAURER]; as opposed to the false prophets’ speaking to please men, not from a regard to truth. Or, “judgment” to discern between graver and lighter offenses, and to denounce punishments accordingly [GROTIUS].

might — moral *intrepidity* in speaking the truth at all costs (^{<5001>}2 Timothy 1:7).

to declare unto Jacob his ... sin — (^{<2801>}Isaiah 58:1). Not to flatter the sinner as the false prophets do with promises of peace.

9. Hear — resumed from ^{<3105>}Micah 3:1. Here begins the leading subject of the prophecy: a demonstration of his assertion that he is “full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah” (^{<3105>}Micah 3:8).

10. They — change of person from “ye” (^{<3109>}Micah 3:9); the third person puts them to a greater distance as estranged from Him. It is, literally, “*Whosoever* builds,” *singular*.

build up Zion with blood — build on it stately mansions with wealth obtained by the condemnation and murder of the innocent (^{<2213>}Jeremiah 22:13 ^{<3227>}Ezekiel 22:27 ^{<3102>}Habakkuk 2:12).

11. heads thereof — the princes of Jerusalem.

judges for reward — take bribes as judges (Micah 7:3).

priests teach for hire — It was their duty to teach the law and to decide controversies gratuitously (^{<6801>}Leviticus 10:11 ^{<6571>}Deuteronomy 17:11 Malachi 2:7; compare ^{<2063>}Jeremiah 6:13 ^{<6011>}Jude 1:11).

prophets ... divine — that is, false prophets.

Is not the Lord among us? — namely in the temple (^{<2882>}Isaiah 48:2 ^{<2076>}Jeremiah 7:4,8-11).

12. ^{<2038>}Jeremiah 26:18 quotes this verse. The Talmud and MAIMONIDES record that at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, Terentius Rufus, who was left in command of the army, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the temple.

mountain of the house — the height on which the temple stands.

as the high places of the forest — shall become as heights in a forest overrun with wild shrubs and brushwood.

CHAPTER 4

⋈ MICAH 4:1-13.

TRANSITION TO THE GLORY, PEACE, KINGDOM, AND VICTORY OF ZION.

1-3. Almost identical with ⋈ Isaiah 2:2-4.

the mountain of the house of the Lord — which just before (⋈ Micah 3:12) had been doomed to be a wild forest height. Under Messiah, its elevation is to be not that of situation, but of moral dignity, as the seat of God’s universal empire.

people shall flow into it — In Isaiah it is “all nations”: a more universal prophecy.

3. rebuke — convict of sin (⋈ John 16:8,9); and subdue with judgments (⋈ Psalm 2:5,9 110:5,6 ⋈ Revelation 2:27 12:5).

many people ... strong nations afar off — In ⋈ Isaiah 2:4 it is “the nations ... many people.”

4. sit every man under his vine, etc. — that is, enjoy the most prosperous tranquillity (⋈ 1 Kings 4:25 ⋈ Zechariah 3:10). The “vine” and “fig tree” are mentioned rather than a *house*, to signify, there will be no need of a covert; men will be safe even in the fields and open air.

Lord of hosts hath spoken it — Therefore it must come to pass, however unlikely now it may seem.

5. For — rather, *Though it be that* all people walk after their several gods, yet we (the Jews in the dispersion) will walk in the name of the Lord. So the *Hebrew* particle means in the *Margin*, ⋈ Genesis 8:21 ⋈ Exodus 13:17 ⋈ Joshua 17:18. The resolution of the exile Jews is: As Jehovah gives us hope of so glorious a restoration, notwithstanding the overthrow of our temple and nation, we must in confident reliance on His promise persevere in the true worship of Him, however the nations around, our superiors now in strength and numbers, walk after their gods [ROSENMULLER]. As the Jews were thoroughly weaned from idols by the Babylonian captivity, so they shall be completely cured of unbelief by their present long dispersion (Zechariah 10:8-12).

6. *assemble her that halteth* — feminine for neuter in *Hebrew* idiom, “*whatever halteth*”: metaphor from sheep wearied out with a journey: all the suffering exiles of Israel (²⁵⁴⁶Ezekiel 34:16 ³¹⁸⁹Zephaniah 3:19).

her ... driven out — all Israel’s outcasts. Called “the Lord’s flock” (²⁴³⁷Jeremiah 13:17 ²⁵⁴³Ezekiel 34:13 37:21).

7. *I will make her that halted a remnant* — I will cause a remnant to remain which shall not perish.

Lord shall reign ... in ... Zion — David’s kingdom shall be restored in the person of Messiah, who is the seed of David and at the same time Jehovah (²²⁰³Isaiah 24:23).

for ever — (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6,7 ²⁷⁰⁴Daniel 7:14,27 ⁴⁰³³Luke 1:33 ⁶¹¹⁵Revelation 11:15).

8. *tower of the flock* — following up the metaphor of *sheep* (see on ³³⁰⁶Micah 4:6). Jerusalem is called the “tower,” from which the King and Shepherd observes and guards His flock: both the spiritual Jerusalem, the Church now whose tower-like elevation is that of doctrine and practice (So 4:4, “Thy neck is like the *tower* of David”), and the literal hereafter (²⁴⁸⁷Jeremiah 3:17). In large pastures it was usual to erect a high wooden tower, so as to oversee the flock. JEROME takes the *Hebrew* for “flock,” *Eder* or *Edar*, as a proper name, namely, a village near Beth-lehem, for which it is put, Beth-lehem being taken to represent the *royal stock of David* (³³⁰²Micah 5:2; compare ⁴¹⁵²Genesis 35:21). But the explanatory words, “the stronghold of the daughter of Zion,” confirm *English Version*.

stronghold — *Hebrew*, “Ophel”; an impregnable height on Mount Zion (⁴²⁰²2 Chronicles 27:3 33:14 ⁴⁶³⁵Nehemiah 3:26,27).

unto thee shall ... come ... the first dominion — namely, the dominion formerly exercised by thee shall come back to thee.

kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem — rather, “the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem shall come (again)”; such as it was under David, before its being weakened by the secession of the ten tribes.

9. Addressed to the daughter of Zion, in her consternation at the approach of the Chaldeans.

is there no king in thee? — asked tauntingly. There is a king in her; but it is the same as if there were none, so helpless to devise means of escape are he and his counsellors [MAURER]. Or, Zion’s pains are because her king is taken away from her (²⁶¹⁹Jeremiah 52:9 ²⁹⁰¹Lamentations 4:20 ²⁶²³Ezekiel

12:13) [CALVIN]. The former is perhaps the preferable view (compare ^{<2407>}Jeremiah 49:7). The latter, however, describes better Zion's kingly state during her present long dispersion (^{<2806>}Hosea 3:4,5).

10. *Be in pain, and labor* — carrying on the metaphor of a pregnant woman. Thou shalt be affected with bitter sorrows before thy deliverance shall come. I do not forbid thy grieving, but I bring thee consolation. Though God cares for His children, yet they must not expect to be exempt from trouble, but must prepare for it.

go forth out of the city — on its capture. So “come out” is used ^{<12412>}2 Kings 24:12 ^{<2336>}Isaiah 36:16.

dwelt in the field — namely, in the open country, defenseless, instead of their fortified *city*. Beside the Chebar (^{<4507>}Psalms 137:1 ^{<2815>}Ezekiel 3:15).

Babylon — Like Isaiah, Micah looks beyond the existing Assyrian dynasty to the Babylonian, and to Judah's captivity under it, and restoration (^{<2307>}Isaiah 39:7 43:14 48:20). Had they been, as rationalists represent, merely sagacious politicians, they would have restricted their prophecies to the sphere of the existing *Assyrian* dynasty. But their seeing into the far-off future of *Babylon's* subsequent supremacy, and Judah's connection with her, proves them to be inspired prophets.

there ... there — emphatic repetition. The very scene of thy calamities is to be the scene of thy deliverance. In the midst of enemies, where all hope seems cut off, *there* shall Cyrus, the deliverer, appear (compare ^{<07444>}Judges 14:14). Cyrus again being the type of the greater Deliverer, who shall finally restore Israel.

11. *many nations* — the subject peoples composing Babylon's armies: and also Edom, Ammon, etc., who exulted in Judah's fall (^{<2726>}Lamentations 2:16 ^{<3011>}Obadiah 1:11-13).

defiled — metaphor from a virgin. Let her be defiled (that is, outraged by violence and bloodshed), and let our eye gaze insultingly on her shame and sorrow (^{<3070>}Micah 7:10). Her foes desired to feast their *eyes* on her calamities.

12. *thoughts of the Lord* — Their *unsearchable wisdom*, overruling seeming disaster to the final good of His people, is the very ground on which the restoration of Israel hereafter (of which the restoration from Babylon is a type) is based in ^{<2558>}Isaiah 55:8; compare with ^{<3003>}Micah 4:3,12,13, which prove that *Israel*, not merely the Christian Church, is the ultimate subject of the prophecy; also in ^{<5113>}Romans 11:13. God's counsel

is to discipline His people for a time with the foe as a scourge; and then to destroy the foe by the hands of His people.

gather them as ... sheaves — them who “gathered” themselves for Zion’s destruction (^{3704E}Micah 4:11) the Lord “shall gather” for destruction by Zion (^{3704E}Micah 4:13), like *sheaves gathered to be threshed* (compare ^{2210E}Isaiah 21:10 ^{2613E}Jeremiah 51:33). The *Hebrew* is *singular*, “sheaf.” However great the numbers of the foe, they are all but as *one sheaf* ready to be threshed [CALVIN]. Threshing was done by treading with the feet: hence the propriety of the image for treading under foot and breaking asunder the foe.

13. *thresh* — destroy thy foes “gathered” by Jehovah as “sheaves” (^{2341E}Isaiah 41:15,16).

thine horn — Zion being compared to an ox treading corn, and an ox’s strength lying in the horns, her *strength* is implied by giving her a *horn of iron* (compare ^{1221E}1 Kings 22:11).

beat in pieces many — (^{2704E}Daniel 2:44).

I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord — God subjects the nations to Zion, not for her own selfish aggrandizement, but for His glory (^{2306E}Isaiah 60:6,9 ^{3407E}Zechariah 14:20, with which compare ^{2328E}Isaiah 23:18) and for their ultimate good; therefore He is here called, not merely God of Israel, but “Lord of the whole earth.”

CHAPTER 5

⋈ MICAH 5:1-15.

THE CALAMITIES WHICH PRECEDE MESSIAH'S ADVENT. HIS KINGDOM, CONQUEST OF JACOB'S FOES, AND BLESSING UPON HIS PEOPLE.

1. *gather thyself in troops* — that is, thou shalt do so, to resist the enemy. Lest the faithful should fall into carnal security because of the previous promises, he reminds them of the calamities which are to precede the prosperity.

daughter of troops — Jerusalem is so called on account of her numerous troops.

he hath laid siege — *the enemy* hath.

they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek — the greatest of insults to an Oriental. Zedekiah, the judge (or king, ⋈ Amos 2:3) of Israel, was loaded with insults by the Chaldeans; so also the other princes and judges (⋈ Lamentations 3:30). HENGSTENBERG thinks the expression, “the judge,” marks a time when no king of the house of David reigned. The smiting on the cheek of other judges of Israel was a type of the same indignity offered to Him who nevertheless is the Judge, not only of Israel, but also of the world, and who is “from everlasting” (⋈ Micah 5:2 ⋈ Isaiah 50:6 ⋈ Matthew 26:67 27:30).

2. *Beth-lehem Ephratah* — (⋈ Genesis 48:7), or, Beth-lehem Judah; so called to distinguish it from Beth-lehem in Zebulun. It is a few miles southwest of Jerusalem. Beth-lehem means “the house of bread”; *Ephratah* means “fruitful”: both names referring to the fertility of the region.

though thou be little among — *though thou be scarcely large enough to be reckoned among*, etc. It was insignificant in size and population; so that in ⋈ Joshua 15:21, etc., it is not enumerated among the cities of Judah; nor in the list in ⋈ Nehemiah 11:25, etc. Under Rehoboam it became a city: ⋈ 2 Chronicles 11:6, “He *built* Beth-lehem.” ⋈ Matthew 2:6 seems to contradict Micah, “thou art *not* the least.” But really he, by an independent testimony of the Spirit, confirms the prophet, Little in *worldly* importance,

thou art not least (that is, far from least, yea, *the very greatest*) among the thousands, of princes of Judah, in the spiritual significance of being the birthplace of Messiah (^{<B12>}John 7:42). God chooses the little things of the world to eclipse in glory its greatest things (^{<C15>}Judges 6:15 ^{<B14>}John 1:46 ^{<B17>}1 Corinthians 1:27,28). The low state of David's line when Messiah was born is also implied here.

thousands — Each tribe was divided into *clans* or “thousands” (each thousand containing a thousand families), which had their several heads or “princes”; hence in ^{<B16>}Matthew 2:6 it is quoted “princes,” substantially the same as in Micah, and authoritatively explained in Matthew. It is not so much this thousand that is preferred to the other thousands of Judah, but the Governor or Chief Prince out of it, who is preferred to the governors of all the other thousands. It is called a “town” (rather in the *Greek*, “village”), ^{<B12>}John 7:42; though scarcely containing a thousand inhabitants, it is ranked among the “thousands” or larger divisions of the tribe, because of its being the cradle of David's line, and of the Divine Son of David. Moses divided the people into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, with their respective “rulers” (^{<D85>}Exodus 18:25; compare ^{<D19>}1 Samuel 10:19).

unto me — unto God the Father (^{<C13>}Luke 1:32): to fulfill all the Father's will and purpose from eternity. So the Son declares (^{<B17>}Psalm 2:7 40:7,8 ^{<B13>}John 4:34); and the Father confirms it (^{<A177>}Matthew 3:17 12:18, compare with ^{<B13>}Isaiah 42:1). God's glory is hereby made the ultimate end of redemption.

ruler — the “Shiloh,” “Prince of peace,” “on whose shoulders the government is laid” (^{<B10>}Genesis 49:10 ^{<B107>}Isaiah 9:6). In ^{<C138>}2 Samuel 23:3, “*He that ruleth* over men must be just,” the same *Hebrew* word is employed; Messiah alone realizes David's ideal of a ruler. Also in ^{<B12>}Jeremiah 30:21, “*their governor* shall proceed from the midst of them”; answering closely to “out of thee shall come forth *the ruler*,” here (compare ^{<B101>}Isaiah 11:1-4).

goings forth ... from everlasting — The plain antithesis of this clause, to “come forth out of thee” (*from Beth-lehem*), shows that the eternal generation of the Son is meant. The terms convey the strongest assertion of infinite duration of which the *Hebrew* language is capable (compare ^{<B107>}Psalm 90:2 ^{<B127>}Proverbs 8:22,2 ^{<B101>}3 John 1:1). Messiah's generation as man coming forth unto God to do His will on earth is *from Beth-lehem*; but as Son of God, His goings forth are *from everlasting*. The promise of the Redeemer at first was vaguely general (^{<C15>}Genesis 3:15). Then the Shemitic division of mankind is declared as the quarter in which He was to be looked for (^{<C102>}Genesis 9:26,27); then it grows clearer, defining the race and nation

whence the Deliverer should come, namely, the seed of Abraham, the Jews (^{<012B>}Genesis 12:3); then the particular tribe, Judah (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10); then the family, that of David (^{<0909>}Psalms 89:19,20); then the very town of His birth, here. And as His coming drew nigh, the very parentage (^{<000E>}Matthew 1:1-17 ^{<012B>}Luke 1:26-35 2:1-7); and then all the scattered rays of prophecy concentrate in Jesus, as their focus (^{<300E>}Hebrews 1:1,2).

3. “Therefore (because of His settled plan) will God give up to their foes His people Israel, until,” etc.

she which travaileth hath brought forth — namely, “the virgin” mother, mentioned by Micah’s contemporary, ^{<2074>}Isaiah 7:14. Zion “in travail” (^{<3009>}Micah 4:9,10) answers to the *virgin* in travail of Messiah. Israel’s deliverance from her long travail-pains of sorrow will synchronize with the appearance of Messiah as her Redeemer (^{<612B>}Romans 11:26) in the last days, as the Church’s spiritual deliverance synchronized with the virgin’s giving birth to H.,’m at His first advent. The ancient *Church’s* travail-like waiting for Messiah is represented by *the virgin’s* travail. Hence, *both* may be meant. It cannot be *restricted* to the Virgin Mary: for Israel is still “given up,” though Messiah has been “brought forth” almost two thousand years ago. But the Church’s throes are included, which are only to be ended when Christ, having been preached for a witness to all nations, shall at last appear as the Deliverer of Jacob, and when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and Israel as a nation shall be born in a day (^{<2307>}Isaiah 66:7-11 ^{<022B>}Luke 21:24 ^{<0111>}Revelation 12:1,2,4; compare ^{<0822>}Romans 8:22).

the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel — (Compare ^{<300E>}Micah 4:7). The remainder of the Israelites dispersed in foreign lands shall return to join their countrymen in Canaan. The *Hebrew* for “unto” is, literally, “upon,” implying superaddition to those already gathered.

4. **he shall stand** — that is, persevere: implying the endurance of His kingdom [CALVIN]. Rather, His sedulous care and pastoral circumspection, as a shepherd *stands* erect to survey and guard His flock on every side (^{<230E>}Isaiah 61:5) [MAURER].

feed — that is, rule: as the *Greek* word similarly in ^{<0026>}Matthew 2:6, *Margin*, means both “feed” and “rule” (^{<2301>}Isaiah 40:11 49:10 ^{<0923>}Ezekiel 34:23; compare ^{<008E>}2 Samuel 5:2 7:8).

in the majesty of the name of the Lord — possessing the majesty of all Jehovah’s revealed attributes (“name”) (^{<230E>}Isaiah 11:2 ^{<0709>}Philippians 2:6,9 ^{<300E>}Hebrews 2:7-9).

his God — God is “*His God*” in a oneness of relation distinct from the sense in which God is *our God* (^{<3077>}John 20:17).

they shall abide — the Israelites (“they,” namely, the *returning remnant* and the “children of Israel previously in Canaan) shall *dwell in permanent security and prosperity* (^{<3008>}Micah 4:4 ^{<2349>}Isaiah 14:30).

unto the ends of the earth — (^{<3008>}Micah 4:1 ^{<1728>}Psalm 72:8 ^{<3007>}Zechariah 9:10).

5. this man — in *Hebrew* simply “This.” The One just mentioned; He and He alone. Emphatical for Messiah (compare ^{<0629>}Genesis 5:29).

the peace — the fountainhead of peace between God and man, between Israel and Israel’s justly offended God (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10 ^{<2306>}Isaiah 9:6 ^{<1124>}Ephesians 2:14,17 ^{<5021>}Colossians 1:20), and, as the consequence, the fountain of “peace on earth,” where heretofore all is strife (^{<3008>}Micah 4:3 ^{<3028>}Hosea 2:18 ^{<3007>}Zechariah 9:10 ^{<0214>}Luke 2:14).

the Assyrian — Being Israel’s most powerful foe at that time, Assyria is made the representative of all the foes of Israel in all ages, who shall receive their final destruction at Messiah’s appearing (^{<2580>}Ezekiel 38:1-23).

seven shepherds, and eight — “Seven” expresses perfection; “seven and eight” is an idiom for *a full and sufficient number* (^{<3659>}Job 5:19 ^{<1069>}Proverbs 6:16 ^{<1102>}Ecclesiastes 11:2).

principal men — literally, “anointed (humble) men” (^{<1319>}Psalm 62:9), such as the apostles were. Their anointing, or consecration and qualification to office, was by the Holy Spirit [CALVIN] (^{<1020>}1 John 2:20,27). “Princes” also were anointed, and they are mentioned as under Messiah (^{<2301>}Isaiah 32:1). *English Version* therefore gives the probable sense.

6. waste — literally, “eat up”: following up the metaphor of “shepherds” (compare ^{<0208>}Numbers 22:4 ^{<3103>}Jeremiah 6:3).

land of Nimrod — Babylon (^{<3008>}Micah 4:10 ^{<0100>}Genesis 10:10); or, including Assyria also, to which he extended his borders (^{<0101>}Genesis 10:11).

in the entrances — the passes into Assyria (^{<1101>}2 Kings 3:21). The *Margin* and JEROME, misled by a needless attention to the parallelism, “with the sword,” translate, “with her own naked swords”; as in ^{<1852>}Psalm 55:21 the *Hebrew* is translated. But “in the entrances” of Assyria, answers to, “within our borders.” As the Assyrians invade *our borders*, so shall *their own borders* or “entrances” be invaded.

he ... he — *Messiah* shall deliver us, when the *Assyrian* shall come.

7. remnant of Jacob — already mentioned in ^{<318B>}Micah 5:3. It in comparative smallness stands in antithesis to the “many people.” Though Israel be but a remnant amidst many nations after her restoration, yet she shall exercise the same blessed influence in quickening them spiritually that the small imperceptible dew exercises in refreshing the grass (^{<631D>}Deuteronomy 32:2 ^{<57216>}Psalms 72:6 110:3). The influence of the Jews restored from Babylon in making many Gentile proselytes is an earnest of a larger similar effect hereafter (^{<2669F>}Isaiah 66:19 ^{<3183>}Zechariah 8:13).

from the Lord — Israel’s restoration and the consequent conversion of the Gentiles are solely of grace.

tarrieth not for man — entirely God’s work, as independent of human contrivance as the dew and rains that fertilize the soil.

8. as a lion — In ^{<318F>}Micah 5:7 Israel’s benignant influence on the nations is described; but here her vengeance on the godless hosts who assail her (^{<2665>}Isaiah 66:15,16,19,24 ^{<3183>}Zechariah 12:3,6,8,9 14:17,18). Judah will be “as as lion,” not in respect to its cruelty, but in its power of striking terror into all opponents. Under the Maccabees, the Jews acquired Idumea, Samaria, and parts of the territory of Ammon and Moab [GROTIUS]. But this was only the earnest of their future glory on their coming restoration.

9. Thine hand shall be lifted up — In ^{<231F>}Isaiah 26:11 it is *Jehovah’s* hand that is lifted up; here *Israel’s* as ^{<318B>}Micah 5:8 implies, just as “Zion” is addressed and directed to “beat in pieces many people” (^{<3183>}Micah 4:13; compare ^{<2545>}Isaiah 54:15,17). For Israel’s foes are *Jehovah’s* foes. When her hand is said to be lifted up, it is *Jehovah’s* hand that strikes the foe by her (compare ^{<12139>}Exodus 13:9, with ^{<12148>}Exodus 14:8).

10. cut off thy horses ... chariots — namely, those used for the purposes of war. Israel had been forbidden the use of cavalry, or to go to Egypt for horses (^{<5716>}Deuteronomy 17:16), lest they should trust in worldly forces, rather than in God (^{<3107>}Psalms 20:7). Solomon had disregarded this command (^{<11026>}1 Kings 10:26,28). Hereafter, saith God, I will remove these impediments to the free course of My grace: horses, chariots, etc., on which ye trust. The Church will never be safe, till she is stripped of all creature trusts, and rests on *Jehovah* alone [CALVIN]. The universal peace given by God shall cause warlike instruments to be needless. He will *cut them off* from Israel (^{<3107>}Zechariah 9:10); as she will cut them off from Babylon, the representative of the nations (^{<26152>}Jeremiah 50:37 51:21).

11. *cut off ... cities ... strongholds* — such as are fortified for war. In that time of peace, men shall live in unwallled villages (^{<3811>}Ezekiel 38:11; compare ^{<2316>}Jeremiah 23:6 49:31 Zechariah 2:8).

12. *witchcrafts out of thine hand* — that is, which thou now usest.

13. *graven images ... cut off* — (Compare ^{<2108>}Isaiah 2:8,18-21 30:22 Zechariah 13:2).

standing images — statues.

14. *groves ... cities* — The “groves” are the idolatrous symbol of Astarte (^{<18121>}Deuteronomy 16:21 ^{<12102>}2 Kings 21:7). “Cities” being parallel to “groves,” must mean cities in or near which such idolatrous groves existed. Compare “city of the house of Baal” (^{<12105>}2 Kings 10:25), that is, a portion of the city sacred to Baal.

15. *vengeance ... such as they have not heard* — or, as the *Hebrew order* favors, “the *nations* that have not hearkened to My warnings.” So the *Septuagint* (^{<4497>}Psalms 149:7).

CHAPTER 6

MICAH 6:1-16.

APPEAL BEFORE ALL CREATION TO THE ISRAELITES TO TESTIFY, IF THEY CAN, IF JEHOVAH EVER DID AUGHT BUT ACTS OF KINDNESS TO THEM FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD: GOD REQUIRES OF THEM NOT SO MUCH SACRIFICES, AS REAL PIETY AND JUSTICE: THEIR IMPIETIES AND COMING PUNISHMENT.

1. *contend thou* — Israel is called by Jehovah to pie ad with Him in controversy. ^{<381>}Micah 5:11-13 suggested the transition from those happy times described in the fourth and fifth chapters, to the prophet's own degenerate times and people.

before the mountains — in their presence; personified as if witnesses (compare ^{<300>}Micah 1:2 ^{<611>}Deuteronomy 32:1 ^{<200>}Isaiah 1:2). Not as the *Margin*, "with"; as God's controversy is with Israel, not *with* them.

2. *Lord's controversy* — How great is Jehovah's condescension, who, though the supreme Lord of all, yet wishes to prove to worms of the earth the equity of His dealings (^{<218>}Isaiah 5:3 43:26).

3. *my people* — the greatest aggravation of their sin, that God always treated them, and still treats them, as *His people*.

what have I done unto thee? — save kindness, that thou revoltest from Me (^{<418>}Jeremiah 2:5,31).

wherein have I wearied thee? — What commandments have I enjoined that should have wearied thee as irksome (^{<118>}1 John 5:3)?

4. *For* — *On the contrary*, so far from doing anything harsh, I did thee every kindness from the earliest years of thy nationality.

Miriam — mentioned, as being the prophetess who led the female chorus who sang the song of Moses (^{<123>}Exodus 15:20). God sent Moses to give the best laws; Aaron to pray for the people; Miriam as an example to the women of Israel.

5. *what Balak ... consulted* — how Balak plotted to destroy thee by getting Balaam to curse thee (^{<0215>}Numbers 22:5).

what Balaam ... answered — how the avaricious prophet was constrained against his own will, to bless Israel whom he had desired to curse for the sake of Balak's reward (^{<0219>}Numbers 24:9-11) [MAURER]. GROTIUS explains it, "how Balaam *answered*, that the only way to injure thee was by tempting thee to idolatry and whoredom" (^{<0316>}Numbers 31:16). The mention of "Shittim" agrees with this: as it was the scene of Israel's sin (^{<0231>}Numbers 25:1-5 ^{<0215>}2 Peter 2:15 ^{<0214>}Revelation 2:14).

from Shittim unto Gilgal — not that Balaam accompanied Israel from Shittim to Gilgal: for he was slain in Midian (^{<0318>}Numbers 31:8). But the clause, "from Shittim," alone applies to Balaam. "Remember" God's kindnesses "from Shittim," the scene of Balaam's wicked counsel taking effect in Israel's sin, whereby Israel merited utter destruction but for God's sparing mercy, "to Gilgal," the place of Israel's first encampment in the promised land between Jericho and Jordan, where God renewed the covenant with Israel by circumcision (^{<0312>}Joshua 5:2-11).

know the righteousness — Recognize that, so far from God having treated thee harshly (Micah 6:3), His dealings have been kindness itself (so "righteous acts" for *gracious*, ^{<0311>}Judges 5:11 ^{<0215>}Psalms 24:5, 112:9).

6. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* — The people, convicted by the previous appeal of Jehovah to them, ask as if they knew not (compare Micah 6:8) what Jehovah requires of them to appease Him, adding that they are ready to offer an immense heap of sacrifices, and those the most costly, even to the fruit of their own body.

burnt offerings — (^{<0301>}Leviticus 1:1-17).

calves of a year old — which used to be offered for a priest (^{<0302>}Leviticus 9:2,3).

7. *rivers of oil* — used in sacrifices (^{<0301>}Leviticus 2:1,15). Will God be appeased by my offering so much oil that it shall flow in myriads of torrents?

my first-born — (^{<0302>}2 Kings 3:27). As the king of Moab did.

fruit of my body — *my children*, as an atonement (^{<0311>}Psalms 132:11). The Jews offered human sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom (^{<0215>}Jeremiah 19:5 32:35 ^{<0227>}Ezekiel 23:27).

8. *He* — Jehovah.

hath showed thee — long ago, so that thou needest not ask the question as if thou hadst never heard (Micah 6:6; compare ^{<502>}Deuteronomy 10:12 30:11-14).

what is good — “the good things to come” under Messiah, of which “the law had the shadow.” The Mosaic sacrifices were but suggestive foreshadowings of His *better* sacrifice (^{<303>}Hebrews 9:23 10:1). To have this “good” first “showed,” or *revealed* by the Spirit, is the only basis for the superstructure of the moral requirements which follow. Thus the way was prepared for the Gospel. The banishment of the Jews from Palestine is designed to preclude the possibility of their looking to the Mosaic rites for redemption, and shuts them up to Messiah.

justly ... mercy — preferred by God to sacrifices. For the latter being *positive* ordinances, are only *means* designed with a view to the former, which being *moral* duties are the *ends*, and of everlasting obligation (^{<492>}1 Samuel 15:22 ^{<306>}Hosea 6:6 12:6 ^{<162>}Amos 5:22,24). Two duties towards *man* are specified — *justice*, or strict equity; and *mercy*, or a kindly abatement of what we might justly demand, and a hearty desire to do good to others.

to walk humbly with thy God — passive and active obedience towards God. The three moral duties here are summed up by our Lord (^{<123>}Matthew 23:23), “judgment, mercy, and faith” (in ^{<142>}Luke 11:42, “the love of God). Compare ^{<102>}James 1:27. *To walk with God* implies constant prayer and watchfulness, familiar yet “humble” converse with God (^{<152>}Genesis 5:24 17:1).

9. unto the city — Jerusalem.

the man of wisdom — As in ^{<136>}Proverbs 13:6, *Hebrew*, “sin” is used for “*a man of sin*,” and in ^{<940>}Psalms 109:4, “prayer” for “*a man of prayer*”; so here “wisdom” for “*the man of wisdom*.”

shall see thy name — shall regard Thee, in Thy revelations of Thyself. Compare the end of ^{<317>}Micah 2:7. God’s “name” expresses the sum-total of His revealed attributes. Contrast with this ^{<230>}Isaiah 26:10, “will not behold the majesty of the Lord.” Another reading is adopted by the *Septuagint*, *Syriac*, and *Vulgate*, “there is deliverance for those who *fear* Thy name.” *English Version* is better suited to the connection; and the rarity of the *Hebrew* expression, as compared with the frequency of that in the other reading, makes it less likely to be an interpolation.

hear ... the rod, etc. — Hear what punishment (compare ^{<313>}Micah 6:13, etc. ^{<203>}Isaiah 9:3 10:5,24) awaits you, and from whom. I am but a man,

and so ye may disregard me; but remember my message is not mine, but God's. Hear the rod when it is come, and you feel its smart. Hear what counsels, what cautions it speaks.

appointed it — (^{3407E}Jeremiah 47:7).

10. Are there yet — notwithstanding all My warnings. Is there to be no end of acquiring treasures by wickedness? Jehovah is speaking (Micah 6:9).

scant measure ... abominable — (^{3100E}Proverbs 11:1 ^{3108E}Amos 8:5).

11. Shall I count them pure — literally, “Shall I be pure with?” etc. *With the pure God shows Himself pure; but with the froward God shows Himself froward* (^{4933E}Psalm 18:26). Men often are changeable in their judgments. But God, in the case of the impure who use “wicked balances,” cannot be pure, that is, cannot deal with them as He would with the pure. VATABLUS and HENDERSON make the “I” to be “any one”; “Can I (that is, one) be innocent with wicked balances?” But as “I,” in ^{3103E}Micah 6:13, refers to Jehovah, it must refer to Him also here.

the bag — in which weights used to be carried, as well as money (^{4853E}Deuteronomy 25:13 ^{4161E}Proverbs 16:11).

12. For — rather, “Inasmuch as”; the conclusion “therefore,” etc. following in ^{3103E}Micah 6:13.

thereof — of Jerusalem.

13. make thee sick in smiting — (^{4836E}Leviticus 26:16, to which perhaps the allusion here is, as in ^{3104E}Micah 6:14 ^{4947E}Psalm 107:17,18 ^{4153E}Jeremiah 13:13).

14. eat ... not be satisfied — fulfilling the threat, ^{4836E}Leviticus 26:26.

thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee — Thou shalt be cast down, not merely on My borders, but in the midst of thee, thy metropolis and temple being overthrown [TIRINUS]. Even though there should be no enemy, yet thou shalt be consumed with intestine evils [CALVIN]. MAURER translates as from an *Arabic* root, “there shall be *emptiness* in thy belly.” Similarly GROTIUS, “there shall be a sinking of thy belly (once filled with food), through hunger.” This suits the parallelism to the first clause. But *English Version* maintains the parallelism sufficiently. The casting down in the midst of the land, including the failure of food, through the invasion thus answering to, “Thou shalt eat, and not be satisfied.”

thou shalt take hold, but ... not deliver — Thou shalt take hold (with thine arms), in order to save [CALVIN] thy wives, children and goods. MAURER,

from a different root, translates, “thou shalt remove them,” in order to save them from the foe. But thou shalt fail in the attempt to deliver them (^{<2418>}Jeremiah 50:37).

that which thou deliverest — If haply thou dost rescue aught, it will be for a time: I will give it up to the foe’s sword.

15. sow ... not reap — fulfilling the threat (^{<4336>}Leviticus 26:16 ^{<4538>}Deuteronomy 28:38-40 ^{<3181>}Amos 5:11).

16. statutes of Omri — the founder of Samaria and of Ahab’s wicked house; and a supporter of Jeroboam’s superstitions (^{<1136>}1 Kings 16:16-28). This verse is a recapitulation of what was more fully stated before, Judah’s sin and consequent punishment. Judah, though at variance with Israel on all things else, imitated her impiety.

works of ... Ahab — (^{<1215>}1 Kings 21:25,26).

ye walk in their counsels — Though these superstitions were the fruit of their king’s “counsels” as a master stroke of state policy, yet these pretexts were no excuse for setting at naught the counsels and will of God.

that I should make thee a desolation — Thy conduct is framed so, as if it was thy set purpose “that I should make thee a desolation.”

inhabitants thereof — namely, of Jerusalem.

hissing — (^{<2215>}Lamentations 2:15).

the reproach of my people — The very thing ye boast of, namely, that ye are “My people,” will only increase the severity of your punishment. The greater My grace to you, the greater shall be your punishment for having despised it, Your being God’s people in name, while walking in His love, was an honor; but now the name, without the reality, is only a “reproach” to you.

CHAPTER 7

MICAH 7:1-20.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CORRUPTION; THE CHOSEN REMNANT, DRIVEN FROM EVERY HUMAN CONFIDENCE, TURNS TO GOD; TRIUMPHS BY FAITH OVER HER ENEMIES; IS COMFORTED BY GOD'S PROMISES IN ANSWER TO PRAYER, AND BY THE CONFUSION OF HER ENEMIES, AND SO BREAKS FORTH INTO PRAISES OF GOD'S CHARACTER.

1. *I am as when*, etc. — It is the same with me as with one seeking fruits after the harvest, grapes after the vintage. “There is not a cluster” to be found: no “first-ripe fruit” (or “early fig”; see on ^{<3306>}Isaiah 28:4) which “my soul desireth” [MAURER]. So I look in vain for any good men left (Micah 7:2).

2. The *Hebrew* expresses “one *merciful and good* in relation to man,” rather than to God.

is perished out of the earth — (^{<3906>}Psalm 12:1).

3. *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly* — literally, “Their hands are for evil that they may do it well” (that is, cleverly and successfully).

the great man, he — emphatic repetition. *As for the great man, he* no sooner has expressed his bad desire (literally, the “mischief or lust of his soul), than the venal judges are ready to wrest the decision of the case according to his wish.

so they wrap it up — The *Hebrew* is used of *intertwining cords together*. The “threefold cord is not quickly broken” (^{<2102>}Ecclesiastes 4:12); here the “prince,” the “judge,” and the “great man” are the three in guilty complicity. “They wrap it up,” namely, they conspire to carry out the great man’s desire at the sacrifice of justice.

4. *as a brier* — or *thorn*; pricking with injury all who come in contact with them (^{<1216>}2 Samuel 23:6,7 ^{<2553>}Isaiah 55:13 ^{<3106>}Ezekiel 2:6).

the day of thy watchmen — the day foretold by thy (true) prophets, as the time of “thy visitation” in wrath [GROTIUS]. Or, “the day of thy *false* prophets being punished”; they are specially threatened as being not only blind themselves, but leading others blindfold [CALVIN].

now — at the time foretold, “at that time”; the prophet transporting himself into it.

perplexity — (²³²¹⁶Isaiah 22:5). They shall not know whither to turn.

5. *Trust ye not in a friend* — Faith is kept nowhere: all to a man are treacherous (²⁴⁰¹⁶Jeremiah 9:2-6). When justice is perverted by the great, faith nowhere is safe. So, in gospel times of persecution, “a man’s foes are they of his own household” (⁴⁰¹²⁵Matthew 10:35,36 ²¹²⁵³Luke 12:53).

guide — a counsellor [CALVIN] able to help and advise (compare ⁴⁸⁸⁸⁸Psalms 118:8,9 146:3). *The head of your family*, to whom all the members of the family would naturally repair in emergencies. Similarly the *Hebrew* is translated in (⁴¹²¹⁴Joshua 22:14 and “chief friends” in ²¹⁶³⁸Proverbs 16:28 [GROTIUS].

her that lieth in thy bosom — thy wife (⁴⁵¹¹⁶Deuteronomy 13:6).

6. *son dishonoreth the father* — The state of unnatural lawlessness in all relations of life is here described which is to characterize the last times, before Messiah comes to punish the ungodly and save Israel (compare ⁴²¹¹⁶Luke 21:16 ³¹⁰¹²2 Timothy 3:1-3).

7. *Therefore I will look unto the Lord* — as if no one else were before mine eyes. We must not only “look *unto* the Lord,” but also “wait *for* Him.” Having no hope from man (Micah 7:5,6), Micah speaks in the name of Israel, who herein, taught by chastisement (Micah 7:4) to feel her sin (Micah 7:9), casts herself on the Lord as her only hope,” in patient waiting (²⁸¹⁸⁸Lamentations 3:26). She did so under the Babylonian captivity; she shall do so again hereafter when the spirit of grace shall be poured on her (³⁸²⁰⁷Zechariah 12:10-13).

8. *Rejoice not* — at my fall.

when I fall, I shall arise — (⁴⁸⁷²⁴Psalms 37:24 ¹¹⁰⁴⁶Proverbs 24:16).

when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light — Israel reasons as her divine representative, Messiah, reasoned by faith in His hour of darkness and desertion (²⁸¹⁰⁷Isaiah 50:7,8,10). Israel addresses Babylon, her triumphant foe (or Edom), as *a female*; the type of her last and worst foes (⁴³¹⁰⁷Psalms 137:7,8). “Mine enemy,” in *Hebrew*, is feminine.

9. *bear* — patiently.

the indignation of the Lord — His punishment inflicted on me (^{<2989>}Lamentations 3:39). The true penitent “accepts the punishment of his iniquity” (^{<6348>}Leviticus 26:41,43); they who murmur against God, do not yet know their guilt (^{<3804>}Job 40:4,5).

execute judgment for me — against my foe. God’s people plead guilty before God; but, in respect to their human foes, they are innocent and undeserving of their foes’ injuries.

bring me forth to the light — to the temporal and spiritual redemption.

I shall behold his righteousness — His gracious faithfulness to His promises (^{<4937>}Psalms 103:17).

10. *shame shall cover her* — in seeing how utterly mistaken she was in supposing that I was utterly ruined.

Where is ... thy God — (^{<4908>}Psalms 42:3,10). If He be “thy God,” as thou sayest, let Him come now and deliver thee. So as to Israel’s representative, Messiah (^{<4274>}Matthew 27:43).

mine eyes shall behold her — a just retribution in kind upon the foe who had said, “Let our eye look upon Zion.” Zion shall behold her foe prostrate, not with the carnal joy of revenge, but with spiritual joy in God’s vindicating His own righteousness (^{<2964>}Isaiah 66:24 ^{<6615>}Revelation 16:5-7).

shall she be trodden down — herself, who had trodden down me.

11. *thy walls ... be built* — under Cyrus, after the seventy years’ captivity; and again, hereafter, when the Jews shall be restored (^{<3091>}Amos 9:11 Zechariah 12:6).

shall the decree be far removed — namely, thy tyrannical decree or rule of Babylon shall be put away from thee, “the statutes that were not good” (^{<3015>}Ezekiel 20:25) [CALVIN]. ^{<4923>}Psalms 102:13-16 ^{<2904>}Isaiah 9:4. The Hebrew is against MAURER’S translation, “the boundary of the city shall be far extended,” so as to contain the people flocking into it from all nations (^{<3072>}Micah 7:12 ^{<2940>}Isaiah 49:20 54:2).

12. *In that day also* — rather, an answer to the supposed question of Zion, When shall my walls be built? “The day (of thy walls being built) is the day when he (that is, many) shall come to thee from Assyria,” etc. [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. The Assyrians (including the Babylonians) who spoiled thee shall come.

and from the fortified cities — rather, to suit the parallelism, “from Assyria even to Egypt.” (*Matzor* may be so translated). So Assyria and Egypt are contrasted in ^{<23029>}Isaiah 19:23 [MAURER]. CALVIN agrees with *English Version*, “from all fortified cities.”

from the fortress even to the river — “from Egypt even to the river” Euphrates (answering in parallelism to “Assyria”) [MAURER]. Compare ^{<23115>}Isaiah 11:15,16 19:23-25 27:13 ^{<23111>}Hosea 11:11 ^{<23100>}Zechariah 10:10.

13. However glorious the prospect of restoration, the Jews are not to forget the visitation on their “land” which is to intervene for the “fruit of (evil caused by) their doings” (compare ^{<23131>}Proverbs 1:31 ^{<23130>}Isaiah 3:10,11 ^{<23114>}Jeremiah 21:14).

14. Feed thy people — Prayer of the prophet, in the name of his people to God, which, as God fulfils believing prayer, is prophetic of what God *would* do. When God is about to deliver His people, He stirs up their friends to pray for them.

Feed — including the idea of both pastoral *rule* and care over His people (^{<23104>}Micah 5:4, *Margin*), regarded as a flock (^{<23100>}Psalm 80:1 100:3). Our calamity must be fatal to the nation, unless Thou of Thy unmerited grace, remembering Thy covenant with “Thine heritage” (^{<23100>}Deuteronomy 4:20 7:6 32:9), shalt restore us.

thy rod — the shepherd’s rod, wherewith He directs the flock (^{<23100>}Psalm 23:4). No longer the rod of punishment (Micah 6:9).

which dwell solitarily in the wood, in ... Carmel — Let Thy people who have been dwelling as it were in a solitude of woods (*in* the world, but not *of* it), scattered among various nations, dwell in Carmel, that is, where there are fruit-bearing lands and vineyards [CALVIN]. Rather, “which are about to dwell (that is, that they may dwell) separate in the wood, in ... Carmel” [MAURER], which are to be no longer mingled with the heathen, but are to dwell as a distinct people in their own land. Micah has here Balaam’s prophecy in view (compare Micah 6:5, where also Balaam is referred to). “Lo, the people shall dwell *alone*” (^{<23109>}Numbers 23:9; compare ^{<23133>}Deuteronomy 33:28). To “feed in the wood in Carmel,” is to feed in the rich pastures among its woods. To “sleep in the woods,” is the image of *most perfect security* (^{<23125>}Ezekiel 34:25). So that the Jews’ “security,” as well as their *distinct nationality*, is here foretold. Also ^{<23131>}Jeremiah 49:31.

Bashan — famed for its cattle (^{<23122>}Psalm 22:12 ^{<23101>}Amos 4:1). Parallel to this passage is ^{<23109>}Jeremiah 50:19. Bashan and Gilead, east of Jordan, were chosen by Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, as abounding in pastures

suited for their many cattle (^{<4631>}Numbers 32:1-42 ^{<4182>}Deuteronomy 3:12-17).

15. *thy ... him* — both referring to Israel. So in ^{<3769>}Micah 7:19 the person is changed from the first to the third, “us ... our ... their.” Jehovah here answers Micah’s prayer in ^{<3744>}Micah 7:14, assuring him, that as He delivered His people from Egypt by miraculous power, so He would again “show” it in their behalf (^{<24644>}Jeremiah 16:14,15).

16. *shall see* — the “marvellous things” (^{<3765>}Micah 7:15 ^{<23414>}Isaiah 26:11).

confounded at all their might — having so suddenly proved unavailing: that might wherewith they had thought that there is nothing which they could not effect against God’s people.

lay ... hand upon ... mouth — the gesture of silence (^{<3216>}Job 21:5 40:4 ^{<19420>}Psalms 107:42 ^{<25215>}Isaiah 52:15). They shall be struck dumb at Israel’s marvellous deliverance, and no longer boast that God’s people is destroyed.

ears ... deaf — They shall stand astounded so as not to hear what shall be said [GROTIUS]. Once they had eagerly drunk in all rumors as so many messages of victories; but then they shall be afraid of hearing them, because they continually fear new disasters, when they see the God of Israel to be so powerful [CALVIN]. They shall close their ears so as not to be compelled to hear of Israel’s successes.

17. *lick the dust* — in abject prostration as suppliants (^{<4719>}Psalms 72:9; compare ^{<23423>}Isaiah 49:23 65:25).

move out of their holes — As reptiles from their holes, they shall come forth from their hiding-places, or fortresses (^{<49385>}Psalms 18:45), to give themselves up to the conquerors. More literally, “they shall tremble from,” that is, tremblingly come forth from their coverts.

like worms — reptiles or crawlers (^{<4524>}Deuteronomy 32:24).

they shall be afraid of the Lord — or, they shall *in fear turn with haste* to the Lord. Thus the antithesis is brought out. They shall tremble forth *from* their holes: they shall in trepidation turn to the Lord for salvation (compare *Note*, see on ^{<3885>}Hosea 3:5, and ^{<4439>}Jeremiah 33:9).

fear because of thee — shall fear Thee, Jehovah (and so fear Israel as under Thy guardianship). There is a change here from speaking *of* God to speaking *to* God [MAURER]. Or rather, “shall fear thee, Israel” [HENDERSON].

18. Grateful at such unlooked-for grace being promised to Israel, Micah breaks forth into praises of Jehovah.

passeth by the transgression — not conniving at it, but forgiving it; leaving it unpunished, as a traveler *passes by* what he chooses not to look into (^{<2191>}Proverbs 19:11). Contrast ^{<3008>}Amos 7:8, and “*mark iniquities,*” ^{<4008>}Psalm 130:3.

the remnant — who shall be permitted to survive the previous judgment: the elect remnant of grace (^{<3307>}Micah 4:7 5:3,7,8).

retaineth not ... anger — (^{<1931>}Psalm 103:9).

delighteth in mercy — God’s forgiving is founded on His nature, which delights in loving-kindness, and is averse from wrath.

19. *turn again* — to us, from having been turned away from us.

subdue our iniquities — literally, “tread under foot,” as being hostile and deadly to us. Without subjugation of our bad propensities, even pardon could not give us peace. When God takes away the guilt of sin that it may not condemn us, He takes away also the power of sin that it may not rule us.

cast ... into ... depths of the sea — never to rise again to view, buried out of sight in eternal oblivion: not merely at the shore side, where they may rise again.

our ... their — change of person. Micah in the first case identifying himself and his sins with his people and their sins; in the second, speaking *of* them and their sins.

20. *perform the truth* — the faithful promise.

to Jacob ... Abraham — Thou shalt make good to their posterity the promise made to the patriarchs. God’s promises are called “mercy,” because they flow slowly from grace; “truth,” because they will be surely performed (^{<4072>}Luke 1:72,73 ^{<5134>}1 Thessalonians 5:24).

sworn unto our fathers — (^{<1949>}Psalm 105:9,10). The promise to Abraham is in ^{<1112>}Genesis 12:2; to Isaac, in ^{<1134>}Genesis 26:24; to Jacob, in ^{<1183>}Genesis 28:13. This unchangeable promise implied an engagement that the seed of the patriarchs should never perish, and should be restored to their inheritance as often as they turned wholly to God (^{<4816>}Deuteronomy 30:1,2).