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Zephaniah
By E. B. Pusey

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah was called to his role not long after Habakkuk. Since his time was near to that of Habakkuk, so his subject was also related. Both lived when, for the sins of the reign of Manasseh, God had pronounced an irreversible sentence of destruction upon Jerusalem. The mission of both was not to the whole people whose sentence was fixed, but to the INDIVIDUALS who would flee from the wrath to come. The form of Habakkuk's prophecy was (as we might say) more subjective; that of Zephaniah was more objective. Habakkuk exhibits the victory of faith in the oppressed faithful — how it would hold to God amid the domestic oppressions, amid the oppressions of the Chaldees by whom those oppressions were to be punished, and, when all shall seem to fail, should, in the certainty of its unseen life, rejoice in its God. The characteristic of Zephaniah is the declaration of the tenderness of the love of God for that remnant of Israel, “the afflicted and poor people,” whom God would “leave in the midst of them” (³⁸¹²Zephaniah 3:12).

Zephaniah has, like Habakkuk, to declare the judgment on the world. He renews the language of Joel as to “the day of the Lord,” and points to nations and individuals. He opens with the prophecy of one wide destruction of the land and all the sinners in it, its idolaters and its oppressors, its princes, its royal family, its merchants, its petty plunderers, who used rapine under color of their masters' name, and brought guilt upon themselves and them. Nothing is either too high or too low to escape the judgments of God. But the visitation upon Judah was only partially of a more comprehensive judgment. Zephaniah foretells the wider destruction of enemies of God's people on all sides — of Philistia, Moab, Ammon, on each side of them, and the distant nations on either side, Ethiopia (which then included Egypt) and Assyria. All these particular judgments contain principles of God's judgments at all times. But in Zephaniah they seem all to converge in the love of God for the remnant of His people. The nation he calls “a nation not desired” (³⁸¹¹Zephaniah 2:1). He calls to God individuals: “It may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger” (³⁸¹³Zephaniah 2:3). He foretells a sifting time, wherein God would “take away the proud among her” (³⁸¹⁴Zephaniah 3:11,12); yet there follows a largeness of Gospel promise and of love (³⁸¹⁵Zephaniah 3:12-17), the grounds of which are explained in the Gospel, but whose tenderness of

language is hardly surpassed even by the overwhelming tenderness of “the love of Christ which passeth knowledge” (~~4189~~Ephesians 3:19).

The prophet’s own name “the Lord hath hid” corresponds with this. The Psalmist had said, using this same word, “He shall HIDE me in His tabernacle in the day of evil: in the secret of His tabernacle He shall hide me” (~~4275~~Psalm 27:5); and, “O how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast “laid up” for them that fear Thee. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man. Thou shalt “keep them secretly” (~~4819~~Psalm 31:19,20) in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” “They take counsel against Thy “hidden” ones” (~~4804~~Psalm 83:4).

The date which Zephaniah prefixed to his prophecy, has not been disputed; for no one felt any interest in denying it. Those who disbelieve definite prophecy invented for themselves a solution, whereby they thought that Zephaniah’s prophecy need not be definite, even though uttered in the time of Josiah; so the fact remained unquestioned.

The unaccustomed fullness with which his descent is given implies so much of that personal knowledge which soon fades away, that those who speak of other titles, as having been prefixed to the books, or portions of books of the prophets, by later hands, have not questioned this. The only question is, whether he lived before or in the middle of the reformation by Josiah. Josiah, who came to the throne when eight years old 641 B.C., began the reformation in the 12th year of his reign, (~~4418~~2 Chronicles 34:3-7), when almost twenty; 630 B.C. The extirpation of idolatry could not, it appears, be accomplished at once. The finding of the ancient copy of the law, during the repairs of the temple in the 18th year of his reign, (2 Kings 22; ~~4418~~2 Chronicles 34:8-28), 624 B.C., gave a fresh impulse to the king’s efforts. He then united the people with himself, bound all the people present to the covenant (~~4238~~2 Kings 23:3; ~~4418~~2 Chronicles 35:31) to keep the law, and made a further destruction of idols (~~4230~~2 Kings 23:4-20; ~~4418~~2 Chronicles 34:33) before the solemn passover in that year. Even after that passover some abominations had to be removed (~~4233~~2 Kings 23:24). It has been thought that the words, “I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place” (~~3004~~Zephaniah 1:4), imply that the worship of Baal had already in some degree been removed, and that God said, that He would complete what had been begun. But the emphasis seems to be rather on the completeness of the destruction, as we should say, that He would efface every remnant

of Baal, than to refer to any effort which had been made by human authority to destroy it.

The prophet joins together, “I will cut off the remnant of Baal, the name of the Chemarim.” The cutting off “the name of the Chemarim,” or idolatrous priests, is like that of Hosea, “I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name” (^{<3027>}Hosea 2:17). As the cutting off of “the name of the Chemarim” means their being utterly obliterated, so, probably, does “the cutting off the remnant of Baal.” The worship of Baal was cut off, not through Josiah, but (as Zephaniah prophesied) through the captivity. Jeremiah asserts its continuance during his long prophetic office (^{<3008>}Jeremiah 2:8; 7:9; 11:13; 19:5; 32:29).

In the absence of any direct authority to the contrary, the description of idolatry by Zephaniah would seem to belong to the period, before the measures to abolish it were begun. He speaks as if everything were full of idolatry (^{<3004>}Zephaniah 1:4,5), the worship of Baal, the worship of the host of heaven upon the housetops, swearing by Maleham, and probably the clothing with strange apparel.

The state also was as corrupt (^{<3003>}Zephaniah 3:3,4) as the worship. Princes and judges, priests and prophets were all alike in sin; the judges distorted the law between man and man, as the priests profaned all which related to God. The princes were roaring lions; the judges, evening wolves, ever famished, hungering for new prey. This too would scarcely have been, when Josiah was old enough to govern in his own person. Both idolatry and perversion of justice were continued on from the reign of his father Amon. Both, when old enough, he removed. God Himself gives him the praise, that he “did judgment and justice, then it was well with him; he judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him; was not this to know Me? saith the Lord” (^{<2025>}Jeremiah 22:15,16). His conversion was in the eighth year of his reign. Then, while he was yet young, he began to “seek after the God of David his father.”

The mention of the “king’s children” (see the note at ^{<3008>}Zephaniah 1:8), whom, God says, He would punish in the great day of His visitation, does not involve any later date. They might, anyhow have been brothers or uncles of the king Josiah. But, more probably, God declares that no rank should be exempt from the judgments of that day. He knew, too, that the sons of Josiah would be then punished for their great sins. The sun of the

temporal rule of the house of David set in unmitigated wickedness and sorrow. Of all its kings after Josiah, it is said, they did “evil in the sight of the Lord;” some were distinguished by guilt; all had miserable ends; some of them with aggravated misery.

Zephaniah then probably finished his course before that 12th year of Josiah, (for this prophecy is one whole) and so just before Jeremiah was, in Josiah’s 13th year, called to his office, which he fulfilled for half a century, perhaps for the whole age of man.

The foreground of the prophecy of Zephaniah remarkably coincides with that of Habakkuk. Zephaniah presupposes that prophecy and fills it up. Habakkuk had prophesied the great wasting and destruction through the Chaldaeans, and then their destruction. That invasion was to extend beyond Judah (for it was said “he shall scoff at kings” (^{<3010>}Habakkuk 1:10)), but was to include it. The instrument of God having been named by Habakkuk, Zephaniah does not even allude to him. Rather, he brings before Judah the other side, the agency of God Himself. God would not have them forget Himself in His instruments. Hence, all is attributed to God. “I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from the land, saith the Lord. I will also stretch out Mine hand upon Judah; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal. In the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, I will punish the princes, etc. In the same day also I will punish all those etc. I will search Jerusalem with candles. The great day of the Lord is near, and I will bring distress upon, etc. O Canaan, land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee. The Lord will be terrible upon them. Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by My sword. And He will destroy Nineveh” (^{<3012>}Zephaniah 1:2,4,8,9,13,14,17; 2:5,11,12,13). The wicked of the people had “said in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil” (^{<3012>}Zephaniah 1:12). Zephaniah inculcates, throughout his brief prophecy, that there is nothing, good or evil, of which He is not the doer or overruler.

But the extent of that visitation is co-extensive with that prophesied by Habakkuk. Zephaniah indeed speaks rather of the effects, the desolation. But the countries, whose desolation or defeat he foretells, are the lands of those, whom the Chaldaeans invaded, worsted, in part desolated. Beside Judah, Zephaniah’s subjects are Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia (which included Egypt), Nineveh. And here he makes a remarkable distinction

corresponding with the events. Of the Ethiopians or Egyptians, he says only, “ye shall be slain by My sword” (^{<A12>}Zephaniah 2:12). Of Assyria he foretells (^{<A13>}Zephaniah 2:13-15) the entire and lasting desolation; the capitals of her palaces in the dust; her cedar-work bare; flocks, wild-beasts, pelican and hedgehog, taking up their abode in her. Moab and Ammon and Philistia have at first sight the two-fold, apparently contradictory, lot; “the remnant of My people,” God says, “shall possess them; the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah” (^{<A14>}Zephaniah 2:9); and, that they should be a perpetual desolation. This also was to take place, after God had brought back His people out of captivity. Now all these countries were conquered by the Chaldaeans, of which at the time there was no human likelihood. But they were not swept away by one torrent of conquest. Moab and Ammon were, at first, allies of Nebuchadnezzar, and rejoiced at the miseries of the people, whose prophets had foretold their destruction. But, beyond this, Nineveh was at that time more powerful than Egypt. Human knowledge could not have discerned, that Egypt should suffer defeat only, Nineveh should be utterly destroyed. It was the custom of the great conquerors of the East, not to destroy capitals, but to re-people them with subjects obedient to themselves. Nineveh had held Babylon by viceroys; in part she had held it under her own immediate rule. Why should not Babylon, if she conquered Nineveh, use the same policy? Humanly speaking, it was a mistake that she did not. It would have been a strong place against the inroads of the Medo-Persian empire. The Persians saw its value so far for military purposes, as to build some fort there;^{f334} and the Emperor Claudius, when he made it a colony, felt the importance of the well-chosen situation.^{f335} It is replaced by Mosul, a city of some (See Keith Johnstone. Dictionary of Geography ed. 1864, and ed. 1867) “20,000 to 40,000” inhabitants. Even after its destruction, it was easier to rebuild it than to build a city on the opposite bank of the Tigris. God declared that it should be desolate. The prediction implied destruction the most absolute. It and its palaces were to be the abode of animals which flee the presence of man; and it perished (see the note at Nahum, above pp. 122-125 in the printed edition).

Again, what was less likely than that Philistia, which had had the rule over Israel, strong in its almost impregnable towns, three of whose five cities were named for their strength, Gaza, “strong;” Ashdod, “mighty;” Ekron, “deep-rooting;” one of which, Ashdod, about this very time, resisted for 29 years the whole power of Egypt, and endured the longest siege of any city

of ancient or modern times — what, to human foresight, less was likely, than that Philistia should come under the power of the “remnant of the house of Judah,” when returned from their captivity? Yet, it is absolutely foretold. “The seacoast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down in the evening. For the Lord their God shall visit them, and restore their captivity” (~~3107~~Zephaniah 2:7). As unlikely was it, that Moab and Ammon, who now had entered upon the territory of the two and a half tribes beyond Jordan, should themselves become the possession of the remnant of Judah. Yet, so it was!

It is then lost labor, even for their own ends, when moderns, who do not believe definite prophecy, would find out some enemy^{f336} whom Zephaniah may have had in mind in foretelling this wide destruction. It still remains that all that Zephaniah says beforehand was fulfilled. It is allowed that he could not foretell this through any human foresight. The avowed object in looking out for some power, formidable in Zephaniah’s time, is, that he could not, by any human knowledge, be speaking of the Chaldeans. But the words stand there. They were written by Zephaniah, at a time when confessedly no human knowledge could have enabled man to predict this of the Chaldeans; nay, no human knowledge would have enabled anyone to predict so absolutely a desolation so wide and so circumstantially delineated.

That school, however, has not been willing to acquiesce in this, that Zephaniah does “not” speak of the instrument, through whom this desolation was effected. They will have it, that they know, that Zephaniah had in his mind one, who was “not” the enemy of the Jews or of Nineveh or of Moab and Ammon, and through whom no even transient desolation of these countries was effected. The whole argument is a simple begging of the question. (Hitzig): “The Egyptians cannot be meant, for the Cushites, who are threatened (~~3127~~Zephaniah 2:12), themselves belong to the Egyptian army (~~3410~~Jeremiah 46:9), and Psammetichus only besieged Ashdod which he also took, without emblazoning ought greater on his shield (Herodotus ii. 157). The Chaldeans come still less into account, because they did not found an independent kingdom until 625 B.C., nor threaten Judaea until after Josiah’s death. On the other hand, an unsuspecting and well-accredited account has been preserved to us, that somewhere about this time the Scythians overflowed Palestine too with their hosts. Herodotus relates (Herodotus i. 105), that the Scythians, after

they had disturbed Cyaxares at the siege of Nineveh, turned toward Egypt; and when they had already arrived in Palestine, were persuaded by Psammetichus to return, and in their return plundered a temple in Ascalon.”

It is true that Herodotus says that “a large Scythian army did, under their king Madyes, burst into Asia in pursuit of the Cimmerians and entered Media — keeping Mount Caucasus on the right,” and that “the Medes opposed and fought them and, being defeated, lost their rule” (Herodotus i. 103,104).

It is true also that Herodotus relates, that (Herodotus i. 105) “they went thence toward Egypt, and when they were in Palestine-Syria, Psammetichus king of Egypt, meeting them, turned them by gifts and entreaties from going further; that when in their return they were in Ascalon, a city of Syria, whereas most of the Scythians passed by without harming ought, some few of them, being left behind, plundered the temple of Venus Ourania.” In this place also, it is true, Herodotus uses a vague expression, that^{f337} “for 28 years the Scythians ruled over Asia, and that all things were turned upside down by their violence and contempt. For beside the tributes, they exacted from each what they laid upon each, and beside the tribute, they drove together and took what each had. And most of them Cyaxares and the Medes entertaining as guests, intoxicated and killed. And then the Medes recovered their empire and “became masters of what they held before.”

But, apart from the inconsistency of the period here assigned to their power, with other history, it appears from the account itself, that by “all Asia” Herodotus means “all upper Asia,” as he expresses himself more accurately, when relating the expedition of Darius against them. (Herodotus i. 106):

“Darius wished to take revenge on the Scythians, because they first, making an inroad into Media and defeating in battle those who went against them, began the wrong. For the Scythians, as I have before said, “ruled upper Asia” for 28 years. For, pursuing the Cimmerians, they made an inroad into Asia, putting down the Medes from their rule, for these, before the Scythians came, ruled Asia.”

The Asia then, which Herodotus supposes the Scythians to have ruled, is co-extensive with the Asia which he supposes the Medes to have ruled previously. But this was all in the north, for having said that (iv. 4), “Phraortes subdued Asia, going from one nation to another,” he adds that, having brought Persia under his yoke, “he led an army against those Assyrians who had Nineveh, and there lost most of his army and his own life.” Apart then from the fabulousness of this supposed empire, established by Phraortes (Herodotus i. 102. See above p. 119 and Rawlinson Herodotus quoted *ibid.*), (Cyxares having been the real thunder of the Median empire,) it is plain that, according to Herodotus himself, the Asia, in which the Scythians plundered and received tribute, were the lands north of Assyria. The expedition against Egypt stands as an insulated predatory excursion, the object of which having been mere plunder, they were bought off by Psammetichus and returned (he tells us) doing no mischief (Herodotus, *loc. cit.*) in their way, except that a few lingerers plundered a temple at Ascalon. It was to Media that they first came; the Medes, whom they defeated; the Median empire to which they succeeded; Cyxares and the Medes, who treacherously destroyed most of them; the Medes, whose empire was restored by the destruction of some, and the return of the rest to their own land. With this agrees the more detailed account of the Scythians by Strabo, who impeaches the accuracy of the accounts of Herodotus.^{f338} Having spoken of the migrations of leaders, and by name, of (i. 3. 21) “Madyes the Scythian” (under whom Herodotus states the irruption to have taken place), he says (xi. 8. 4), “the Sacae made the like inroad as the Cimmerians and the Trerians, some longer, some nigh at hand, for they took possession of Bactriana, and acquired the best land of Armenia, which they also left, named after them Sacasene, and advanced as far as to the Cappadocians and especially those on the Euxine, whom they now call of Pontus (Pontians). But the generals of the Persians who were at the time there, attacking them by night, while they were making a feast upon the spoils, utterly extirpated them.” The direction which he says they took, is the same as that of the Cimmerians, whom Herodotus says that they followed. (Prologomena i. 3. 21):

“The Cimmerians, whom they also call Trerians, or some tribe of them, often overrun the right side of the Pontus, sometimes making inroads on the Paphlagonians, at others, on the Phrygians. Often also the Cimmerians and Trerians made the like attacks, and they

say that the Trerians and Cobus (their king) were, at last expelled by Madyes king of the (Scythians).”

Strabo also explains, what is meant by the tributes, of which Herodotus speaks. He is speaking of the Nomadic tribes of the Scythians generally (xi. 8. 3):

“Tribute was, to allow them at certain stated times, to overrun the country (for pasturage) and carry off booty. But when they roamed beyond the agreement, there arose war, and again reconciliations and renewed war. Such was the life of the nomads, always setting on their neighbors and then being reconciled again.”

The Scythians then were no object of fear to the Jews, whom they passed wholly unnoticed and probably unconscious of their existence in their mountain country, while they once and once only swept unharmed along the fertile tracks on the sea-shore, then occupied by the old enemies and masters of the Jews, the Philistines. But Herodotus must also have been misinformed as to the length of time, during which they settled in Media, or at least as to the period during which their presence had any sensible effects. For Cyaxares, whom he represents as having raised the siege of Nineveh, in consequence of the inroad of the Scythians into Media, came to the throne, according to the numbers of Herodotus, 633 B.C. For the reign of Cyaxares having lasted according to him 40 years (Herodotus i. 106), that of Astyages 35 (Herodotus i. 130), and that of Cyrus 29 (Herodotus i. 214), these 104 years, counted back from the known date of the death of Cyrus, 529 or 530 B.C., bring us to 633 or 636 B.C. as the beginning of the reign of Cyaxares. But the invasion of the Scythians could not have taken place at the first accession of Cyaxares, since, according to Herodotus, he had already defeated the Assyrians, and was besieging Nineveh, when the Scythians burst into Media. According to Herodotus, moreover, Cyaxares (Herodotus i. 103) “first distributed Asiatics into troops, and first ordered that each should be apart, spearmen, and archers and cavalry, for before, all were mixed pele-mele together.” Yet, it would not be in a very short time, that those who had been wont to fight in a confused mass, could be formed into an orderly and disciplined army. We could not then, anyhow, date the Scythian inroad, earlier than the second or third year of Cyaxares. On the other hand the date of the capture of Nineveh is fixed by the commencement of the Babylonian Empire, Babylon falling to Nabopolassar. The duration of that empire is measured by the

reigns of its kings,^{f339} of whom, according to Ptolemy's Canon, Nabopolassar reigned 21 years; Nebuchadnezzar, (there called Nabocollasar) 43; Evil-Merodach (Iluaroadam) 2; Neriglissar (Niricassolassar) 4; Nabunahit (Nabonadius with whom his son Belshazzar was co-regent) 17; in all 87 years; and it ends in an event of known date, the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, 538 B.C. The addition of the 87 years of the duration of the empire to that date carries us back to the date assigned to the capture of Nineveh by Nabopolassar in conjunctitan with Cyaxares, 625 B.C. The capture then of Nineveh was removed by 8 or 9 years only from that, which Herodotus gives as the time of the accession of Cyaxares, and since the attack upon Nineveh can hardly have been in his first year, and the last siege probably occupied two, the 28 years of Scythian dominion would dwindle down into something too inconsiderable for history. Probably, they represent some period from their first incursion into Media, to the final return of the survivors, during which they marauded in Media and Upper Asia. The mode, by which "the greater part" (Herodotus tells us) were destroyed, intoxication and subsequent murder at a banquet, implies that their numbers were no longer considerable.

History, with the exception of that one marauding expedition toward Egypt, is entirely silent as to any excursions of the Scythians, except in the north. No extant document hints at any approach of theirs to any country mentioned by Zephaniah. There was no reason to expect any inroad from them. With the exception of Bactriana, which lies some 18 degrees east of Media and itself extended over some 7 degrees of longitude, the countries mentioned by Strabo lie, to what the kings of Assyria mention as the far north, Armenia, and thence, they stretched out to the west, yet keeping mostly to the neighborhood of the Euxine. Considering the occasion of the mention of the invasion of the Scythians, the relief which their invasion of Media gave to Nineveh, it is even remarkable that there is no mention of any ravages of theirs throughout Mesopotamia or Babylonia. Zephaniah speaks, not of marauding, but of permanent desolation of Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and of destructive war also on Ethiopia. There is no reason to think that the Scythians approached any of these lands, except Philistia, which they passed through unharmed. The sacred writers mention even smaller nations, by whom God chastised Judah in their times, "bands of the Syrians, of Moab, of the children of Ammon," as well as Assyria and Babylon. Ezekiel (Ezekiel 38; 39), when he prophesies of the inroad of Northern nations, Meshech and Tubal, Gomer and Togormah,

speaks of it as far removed in the future, prophecies not their destroying but their own destruction.

It does not affect the argument from prophecy, whether Zephaniah did or did not know, through whom the events, which he predicted, should be brought to pass. But, setting aside the question whether he had from the prophecies of Habakkuk and Isaiah, a human knowledge of the Chaldees or whether God instructed him, how what he foretold should be accomplished, or whether God spread out before his mind that which was to be, apart from time, in prophetic vision, Zephaniah DID picture what came to pass. But it is an intense paradox, when men, 2500 years after his date, assert, not only that Zephaniah's prophecies had no relation to the Chaldees, in whom his words were fulfilled, and who are the objects of the prophecies of Habakkuk and Jeremiah, but that THEY know, what MUST have been, and (as they assert) what WAS in the prophet's mind; and that he had in his mind, NOT those in whom his words were fulfilled, but others in whom they were "not" fulfilled, to whom he does not allude in one single trait, who left no trace behind them, and whose march along an enemy's tract on the seacoast was of so little account, that no contemporary historian, nor Josephus, even alludes to it (The name [Σκυθοπολις](#)), which Josephus says the Greeks gave to Bethshan, (Ant. 12. 8. 5) and which they alone can have given, is manifestly, as being Greek, too late to contain any tradition as to the presence of the Scythians in Palestine, three centuries before the Greeks, under Alexander, became acquainted with Palestine. Jerome regarded it as a corruption of "Succoth." He says on ^{<013317>}Genesis 33:17, "In the Hebrew is read "Succoth"). But there is to this day a city beyond Jordan into which this name enters in part, Scythopolis." Quaestt. Hebr. ad Genesis (Opp. iii. 358. ed. Vall.) quoted by Reland, p. 992).

It has been already observed, that each prophet connects himself with one or more of those before them. They use the language of their predecessors in some one or more sentences, apparently with this precise object. They had overflowing fullness of words; yet, they chose some saying of the former prophet, as a link to those before them. We have seen this in Amos (See the introduction to Joel), then in Obadiah, (See the introduction to Obadiah), who uses the language of Balaam, David, Joel, Amos; of Jeremiah, in regard to Obadiah (See the introduction to Obadiah); of Micah to his great predecessor, Micaiah, and Amos (See the introduction to Micah); of Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel to Micah (See

Introduction to Micah ab. p. 5); of Nahum to Jonah (See the introduction to Nahum); and of Isaiah (I think), to Nahum (See the introduction to Nahum); of Habakkuk, to Isaiah and Micah (See the introduction to Nahum), It is in conformity with this, that Zephaniah, even more than those before him, uses language of earlier prophets. It arises, not (as people have been pleased to say) from any declension in the originality of prophets at his date, but from his subject. It has been said, “if anyone desire to see the utterances of the prophets in brief space, let him read through this brief Zephaniah.” The office of Zephaniah was not to forewarn of any instrument of God’s judgments. The destruction is prophesied, not the destroyer. His prophecy is, more than those of most other prophets, apart from time, to the end of time. He prophesies of WHAT shall be, not WHEN it shall be, nor BY WHOM. He does not “expect” or “anticipate” or “forebode!” He absolutely declares the future condition of certain nations; but not the “how” of its coming to pass. If Nineveh, Edom and Ammon had not been desolated, his prophecy would have been falsified; each fulfillment became the earnest of a larger fulfillment; but all shall not be completed until “the earth and all that is therein shall be burned up.”

It belongs to this character of Zephaniah, that he gathers from other prophets before him, especially Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Habakkuk, expressions relating to, or bearing on, judgment to come, or again to that his other great subject, God’s love for the remnant of His people; yet mostly in fragments only and allusively. They were key-notes for those who knew the prophets. Thus, in calling on man to hushed submission before God, because a day of judgment was coming, he blends into one verse (^{<3007>}Habakkuk 1:7) Habakkuk’s call, “hush before the Lord” (^{<3020>}Habakkuk 2:20), and the warning words of Isaiah, Joel, Obadiah (^{<2936>}Isaiah 13:6; ^{<2905>}Joel 1:15; 4:15; ^{<3015>}Obadiah 1:15), “nigh is the day of the Lord;” the image of the “sacrifice,” which God had commanded, and the remarkable word, “consecrated,” of God’s instruments. The allusion is contained in single words, “sacrifice, consecrated;” the context in which they are embodied is different. The idea only is the same, that Almighty God maketh, as it were, a sacrifice to Himself of those who incorrigibly rebel against Him. Elsewhere, Isaiah draws out the image at much length; “A sword of the Lord is full of bloods; it is smeared with fat, with the blood of lambs and of goats; with the fat of kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom” (^{<2946>}Isaiah 34:6). Jeremiah uses the image in equal fullness of the

overthrow of Pharaoh-Necho at the Euphrates; “This is a day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that He may avenge Him of His adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with blood, for the Lord God hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates” (^{<2460>}Jeremiah 46:10). Ezekiel expands it yet more boldly (^{<2597>}Ezekiel 39:17). Zephaniah drops everything local, and condenses the image into the words, “The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice; He hath consecrated His guests,” adding the new bold image, that they whom God employed were, as it were, His invited guests whom He consecrated thereto.

In like way, as to the day of the Lord itself, he accumulates all words of terror from different prophets; from Joel the words, “a day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness” (^{<2302>}Joel 2:2; ^{<3015>}Zephaniah 1:15): to these he adds “of shouting and the sound of the trumpet” (^{<3016>}Zephaniah 1:16; ^{<3002>}Amos 2:2), used by Amos in relation to the destruction of Moab; the two combinations, which precede, occur, the one in a different sense, the other with a slightly different grammatical inflection, in Job.

From Isaiah, Zephaniah adopts that characteristic picture of self-idolizing, which brings down God’s judgments on its pride; (the city) “that dwelleth securely, that said in her heart, I and no I beside” (^{<2378>}Isaiah 47:8; ^{<3025>}Zephaniah 2:15).

Even where Isaiah says, “For a consumption and that decreed, the Lord God of hosts makes in the midst of all the earth” (^{<2303>}Isaiah 10:23), and, slightly varying it, “For a consumption and that decreed, I have heard from the Lord God of hosts upon all the earth” (^{<2332>}Isaiah 28:22), Zephaniah, retaining the two first words, which occur in both places, says more concisely, “For a consumption, nought but terror, will He make all the inhabitants of the earth.” Yet, simple as the words are, he pronounced, that God would not only “bring a desolation upon the earth,” or “in the midst of the earth,” but would make its inhabitants one consumption. Nahum had said of Nineveh, “with an overflowing flood He will make the place thereof an utter consumption” (^{<3008>}Nahum 1:8). The most forceful words are the simplest.

He uses the exact words of Isaiah, “From beyond the rivers of Cush” (^{<3030>}Zephaniah 3:10; ^{<2380>}Isaiah 18:1), than which none can be simpler, and employs the word of festive procession, though in a different form, and

having thus connected his prophecy with Isaiah's, all the rest, upon which the prophecy turns, is varied.

In like way he adopts from Micah the three words, "her-that-halteth, and-will-gather her-that-is-driven-out" (^{<3006>}Micah 4:6; ^{<3009>}Zephaniah 3:19). The context in which he resets them is quite different.

It has been thought, that the words, "I have heard the reproach of Moab," may have been suggested by those of Isaiah, who begins his lament over Moab, "We have heard of the pride of Moab;" but the force and bearing of the words is altogether different, since it is God Who says, "I have heard," and so He will punish.

The combination, "the exulters of pride" (^{<2913>}Isaiah 13:3; ^{<3001>}Zephaniah 3:11), is common to him with Isaiah: its meaning is uncertain; but it is manifestly different in the two places, since the one relates to God, the other to man.

The words, "They shall build houses and shall not dwell therein; they shall plant vineyards and not drink the wine thereof", ^{f340} are from the original threat in Deuteronomy, from which also the two words, "They-shall-walk as-the-blind" (^{<3017>}Zephaniah 1:17), may be a reminiscence, but with a conciseness of its own and without the characteristic expressions of Deuteronomy, adopted by other sacred writers: "They shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness" (^{<1829>}Deuteronomy 28:29).

Altogether these passages are evidence that Zephaniah is of later date than the prophecies in which the like language occurs; and the fact that he does employ so much language of his predecessors furnishes a strong presumption in any single case, that he in that case also adopted from the other sacred writer the language which they have in common.

It is chiefly on this ground, that a train of modern critics ^{f341} have spoken disparagingly of the outward form and style of Zephaniah. It has, however, a remarkable combination of fullness with conciseness and force. Thus, he begins the enumeration of those upon whom the destruction should fall, with the words, "consuming I will consume all" (^{<3002>}Zephaniah 1:2): to an enumeration co-extensive with the creation, he adds unexpectedly, "and the stumblingblocks with the wicked" (^{<3003>}Zephaniah 1:3), anticipating our Lord's words of the Day of Judgment, "they shall gather the stumblingblocks and them that do iniquity" (^{<0131>}Matthew 13:41): to the different idolatries he adds those of a divided faith, "swearers to the Lord

and swearers by Malcham” (~~3005~~Zephaniah 1:5); to those who turned away from God he adds those who were unearnest in seeking Him (~~3006~~Zephaniah 1:6).

Again, after the full announcement of the destruction in the day of the Lord, the burst, in those five words, “sift-yourself and-sift (on) nation unlonged for” (~~3001~~Zephaniah 2:1), is, in suddenness and condensation, like Hosea; and so again, in five words, after the picture of the future desolation of Nineveh, the abrupt turn to Jerusalem, “Woe rebellious and-defiled (thou) oppressive city” (~~3001~~Zephaniah 2:1), and then follow the several counts of her indictment, in brief disjointed sentences, first negatively, as a whole; each in three or four words, “she-listened not to-voice; she-received not correction; in-the-Lord she-trusted not; to-her-God she-approached not” (~~3002~~Zephaniah 3:2); then, in equally broken words, each class is characterized by its sins; “her-princes in-her-midst are roaring lions; her-judges evening wolves; not gnawed-they-bones on-the-morrow; her-prophets empty-babblers, men of-deceits; her-priests profaned holiness, violated law” (~~3003~~Zephaniah 3:3,4) Then in sudden contrast to all this contumacy, neglect, despite of God, He Himself is exhibited as in the midst of her; the witness and judge of all; there, where they sinned. “The-Lord righteous in-her-midst; He-doth not iniquity; by-morning by-morning His-judgment He-giveth to-light; He-faileth not” (~~3005~~Zephaniah 3:5); and then in contrast to the holiness and the judgments of God, follows in four words, the perseverance of man in his shamelessness, and — the fruit of all this presence and doings of the holy and righteous God and judge is, “and-not knoweth the wrong-doer shame.” Zephaniah uses the same disjoining of the clauses in the description of God’s future manifestation of His love toward them. Again, it is the same thought, “The-Lord thy-God-(is) in-thy-midst” (~~3007~~Zephaniah 3:17); but now in love; “mighty, shall-save; He-shall-rejoice over-thee with-joy; He-shall-keep-silence in-His-love; He-shall-rejoice over-thee with-jubilee.” The single expressions are alike condensed; “she-hearkened not to-voice” (~~3002~~Zephaniah 3:2), stands for what Jeremiah says at such much greater length, how God had sent all His servants “the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them, but they hearkened not unto Me nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck” (~~2472~~Jeremiah 7:24-28). The words^{f342} “shall-be-silent in-His-love, in their primary meaning, express the deepest human love, but without the accustomed image of betrothal.

“The whole people of Canaan” (~~3011~~Zephaniah 1:11, compare ~~3027~~Hosea 12:7) reminds one of Hosea; “the-men-coagulated on-their-lees” (~~3012~~Zephaniah 1:12) is much expanded by Jeremiah (~~3481~~Jeremiah 48:11), his word occurs before him in Job only and the song of Moses (~~3800~~Job 10:10; ~~0258~~Exodus 15:8). Single poetic expressions are, that Moab should become “the possession of briars” (~~3019~~Zephaniah 2:9), the word itself being framed by Zephaniah; in the description of the desolation of Nineveh, “a voice singeth in the window; desolation is on the threshold” (~~3024~~Zephaniah 2:14), the imagery is so bold, that modern criticism has thought that the word “voice” which occurs in the Old Testament 328 times and with pronouns 157 times more, must signify “an owl,” and “desolation” must stand for “a crow.” Very characteristic is the word, ““He (see below the note at ~~3021~~Zephaniah 2:11) shall famish” all the gods of the earth,” expressing with wonderful irony, the privation of their sacrifices, which was the occasion of the first pagan persecutions of the Christians.

When then a writer, at times so concise and poetic as Zephaniah is in these places, is, at others, so full in his descriptions, this is not prolixity, but rather vivid picturing; at one time going through all the orders of creation (~~3003~~Zephaniah 1:3); at another, different classes of the ungodly (~~3004~~Zephaniah 1:4-9): at yet another, the different parts of the scared woe-stricken city (~~3010~~Zephaniah 1:10,11), to set before our eyes the universality of the desolation. Those who are familiar with our own great northern poet of nature, will remember how the accumulation of names adds to the vividness of his descriptions. Yet, here too, there is great force in the individual descriptions, as when he pictures the petty plunderers for their master, and “fill their masters’ houses” — not with wealth but — “with violence and fraud” (~~3009~~Zephaniah 1:9. Amos has the like idea (~~3080~~Amos 3:10)), all which remains of wealth gained by fraud and extortion being the sins themselves, which dwell in the house of the fraudulent to his destruction.

In the strictly prophetic part of his office, Jerusalem having been marked out by Micah and Isaiah before him, as the place where God would make the new revelation of Himself, Zephaniah adds, what our Lord revealed to the Samaritan woman (~~4021~~John 4:21), that Jerusalem should no longer be the abiding center of worship. “They shall worship Him, every man from his place, all the isles of the nations” (~~3021~~Zephaniah 2:11), is a prophecy which, to this day, is receiving an increasing accomplishment. It is a prophecy, not of the spread of Monotheism, but of the worship of Him, to

whose worship at that time a handful of Jews could with difficulty be brought to adhere, the desertion or corruption or association of whose worship with idolatry Zephaniah had to denounce and to foretell its punishment. The love which God should then show to His own is expressed in words, unequalled for tenderness and in conformity to that love is the increasing growth of holiness, and the stricter requirements of God's holy justice. Again, Zephaniah has a prelude to our blessed Lord's words, "to whom much is given, of him shall much be required" (^{<Q28>}Luke 12:48), or His Apostle's, of the great awe in working out our salvation (^{<P2>}Philippians 2:12). Progress is a characteristic and condition of the Christian life; "We beseech you, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, ye would abound more and more" (^{<Q1>}1 Thessalonians 4:1). Even so Zephaniah bids "all the meek of the earth, who have wrought His judgments or law to seek diligently that meekness" (^{<P3>}Zephaniah 2:3), which had already characterized them, and that, not in view of great things, but, if so be they might be saved; it may be that ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, as Peter saith, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (^{<Q4>}1 Peter 4:18). It is again remarkable, how he selects meekness, as the characteristic of the new state of things, which he promises. He anticipates the contrast in the Magnificat, in which the lowest lowliness was rewarded by the highest exaltation. As it is said there, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek" (^{<P5>}Luke 2:52), so the removal of the proud "from within thee," and the "leaving of an afflicted and poor people within thee" (^{<P6>}Zephaniah 3:12), is the special promise by Zephaniah.

Little is said of the captivity. It is a future, variously assumed subject (^{<P7>}Zephaniah 3:13). Judah in the farthest lands, "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, is the daughter of My dispersed" (^{<P8>}Zephaniah 3:10); the whole earth is the scene of their shame (^{<P9>}Zephaniah 3:19); their praises should be commensurate with their shame, "when I turn back your captivity before your eyes" (^{<P10>}Zephaniah 3:20; 2:7). But this turning away of their captivity is the only notice, that their punishment should be the going into captivity. The captivity itself is pre-supposed, as certain and as known. So neither are there any images from temporal exaltation. All pride should be removed, as utterly unbecoming God's holy presence: "thou shalt no more be haughty in My holy mountain" (^{<P11>}Zephaniah 2:11). The words expressive of the abasement of those within her are proportionably strong,

“My afflicted and poor” (^{<312>}Zephaniah 2:12). Some are accustomed, in these days, to talk of God’s prophets as patriots. They were such truly, since they loved the land of the Lord with a divine love. But what mere “patriot” would limit his promises to the presence of “a poor people in a low estate,” with an unseen presence of God? The description belongs to HIS kingdom, which was “NOT of this world” (^{<313>}John 18:36): the only king whom Zephaniah speaks of, “the king of Israel” (^{<315>}Zephaniah 3:15), is Almighty God. The blessing which he promises, is the corresponding, blessing of peace, “Fear thou not; thou shalt not see evil anymore, none shall make them afraid” (^{<316>}Zephaniah 3:16). But the words “Let not thy hands be slack” (^{<317>}Zephaniah 3:2, (Zephaniah 4:2 in Hebrew)), imply that they shall be aggressive on the world; that they were not to relax from the work which God assigned to them, the conversion of the world.

An allusion to the prophet Joel makes it uncertain whether words of Zephaniah relate to the first coming of our Lord, or the times which should usher in the second coming, or to both in one; and so, whether, in accordance with his general character of gathering into one all God’s judgments to His end, he is speaking of the first restoration of the one purified language of faith and hope, when “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (^{<412>}Acts 4:32), or whether he had his mind fixed rather on the end, “when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in” (^{<512>}Romans 11:25). The words also (since they may be taken either way) (see the note at ^{<310>}Zephaniah 3:10) leave it uncertain whether the Gentiles are spoken of as bringing in the people of God, (as they shall at the end) or whether the first conversion of the Jews, even in the most distant countries, is his subject.

In any case, Zephaniah had a remarkable function — to declare the mercy and judgment of God, judgments both temporal and final, mercies, not of this world, promised to a temper not of this world, “the wisdom which is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (^{<517>}James 3:7).

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

NOTES ON ZEPHANIAH 1

Zephaniah 1:1. *The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah* It seems likely that more forefathers of the prophet are named than is the wont of Holy Scripture, because the last so named was some one remarkable. Nor is it impossible that Zephaniah should have been the great grandson of the King Hezekiah, for although Holy Scripture commonly names the one son only who is in the sacred line, and although there is one generation more than to Josiah, yet if each had a son early, Zephaniah might have been contemporary with Josiah. The names seem also mentioned for the sake of their meaning; at least it is remarkable how the name of God appears in most. Zephaniah, “whom the Lord hid;” Gedaliah, “whom the Lord made great;” Amariah, “whom the Lord promised;” Hezekiah, “whom the Lord strengthened.”

Zephaniah 1:2. *I will utterly consume all things* Better “all.” The word is not limited to “things” “animate” or “inanimate” or “men;” it is used severally of each, according to the context; here, without limitation, of “all.” God and all stand over against one another; God and all which is not of God or in God. God, he says, will utterly consume all from off the land (earth). The prophet sums up in few words the subject of the whole chapter, the judgments of God from his own times to the day of Judgment itself. And this Day Itself he brings the more strongly before the mind, in that, with wonderful briefness, in two words which he conforms, in sound also, the one to the other, he expresses the utter final consumption of all things. He expresses at once the intensity of action and blends their separate meanings, “Taking away I will make an end of all;” and with this he unites the words used of the flood, “from off the face of the earth.” Then he goes through the whole creation as it was made, pairing “man and beast,” which Moses speaks of as created on the sixth day, and the creation of the fifth day, “the fowls of the heaven and the fishes of the sea;” and before each he sets the solemn word of God, “I will end,” as the act of God Himself. The words can have no complete fulfillment, until “the earth and

the works that are therein shall be burned up” (~~GEN~~2 Peter 3:10), as the Psalmist too, having gone through the creation, sums up, “Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust” (~~PSA~~Psalm 104:29); and then speaks of the re-creation, “Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth” (~~PSA~~Psalm 104:36), and, “Of old Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands; they shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed” (~~PSA~~Psalm 103:25). Local fulfillments there may, in their degree, be. Jerome speaks as if he knew this to have been. Jerome: “Even the brute animals feel the wrath of the Lord, and when cities have been wasted and men slain, there cometh a desolation and scarceness of beasts also and birds and fishes; witness Illyricum, witness Thrace, witness my native soil,” (Stridon, a city on the confines of Dalmatia and Pannonia) “where, beside sky and earth and rampant brambles and deep thickets, all has perished.” But although this fact, which he alleges, is borne out by natural history, it is distinct from the words of the prophet, who speaks of the fish, not of rivers (as Jerome) but of the sea, which can in no way be influenced by the absence of man, who is only their destroyer. The use of the language of the histories of the creation and of the deluge implies that the prophet has in mind a destruction commensurate with that creation. Then he foretells the final removal of offences, in the same words which our Lord uses of the general Judgment. “The Son of Man shall send forth His Angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity” (~~MAT~~Matthew 13:41).

~~ZEP~~**Zephaniah 1:3.** *The stumbling-blocks with the wicked* Not only shall the wicked be utterly brought to an end, or, in the other meaning of the word, “gathered into bundles to be taken away,” but all causes of stumbling too; everything, through which others can fall, which will not be until the end of all things. Then, he repeats, yet more emphatically, “I will cut off the whole race of man from the face of the earth,” and then he closes the verse, like the foregoing, with the solemn words, “saith the Lord.” All this shall be fulfilled in the Day of Judgment, and all other fulfillments are earnest of the final Judgment. They are witnesses of the ever-living presence of the Judge of all, that God does take account of man’s deeds. They speak to men’s conscience, they attest the existence of a divine law, and therewith of the future complete manifestation of that

law, of which they are individual sentences. Not until the prophet has brought this circle of judgments to their close, does he pass on to the particular judgments on Judah and Jerusalem.

<3004>Zephaniah 1:4. *I will also stretch out Mine Hand* As before on Egypt.^{f343} Judah had gone in the ways of Egypt and learned her sins, and sinned worse than Egypt. “The mighty Hand and stretched-out Arm” (<2420>Jeremiah 2:10,11), with which she had been delivered, shall be again “stretched out,” yet, not for her but “upon” her, “upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” In this threatened destruction of all, Judah and Jerusalem are singled out, because “judgment” shall “begin at the house of God” (<1047>1 Peter 4:17; <2420>Jeremiah 25:29). They who have sinned against the greater grace shall be most signally punished. Yet, the punishment of those whom God had so chosen and loved is an earnest of the general judgment. This too is not a partial but a general judgment “upon “all” the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

And I will cut off the remnant of Baal that is, to the very last vestige of it. Isaiah unites “name and residue” (<2342>Isaiah 14:22,) as equivalents, together with the proverbial, posterity and descendant. Zephaniah distributes them in parallel clauses, “the “residue” of Baal and the “name” of the Chemarim.” Good and evil have each a root, which remains in the ground, when the trunk has been hewn down. There is “a remnant according to the election of grace,” when “the rest have been blinded” (<5115>Romans 11:5,7); and this is a “holy seed” (<2363>Isaiah 6:13) to carry on the line of God. Evil too has its remnant, which, unless diligently kept down, shoots up again, after the conversion of peoples or individuals. The “mind of the flesh” remains in the regenerate also. The prophet foretells the complete excision of the whole “remnant of Baal,” which was fulfilled in it after the captivity, and shall be fulfilled as to all which it shadows forth, in the Day of Judgment. “From this place;” for in their phrensy, they dared to bring the worship of Baal into the very temple of the Lord (<1234>2 Kings 23:4). Ribera: “Who would ever believe that in Jerusalem, the holy city, and in the very temple idols should be consecrated? Whoso seeth the ways of our times will readily believe it. For among Christians and in the very temple of God, the abominations of the pagan are worshipped. Riches, pleasures, honors, are they not idols which Christians prefer to God Himself?”

And the name of the Chemarim with the priests Of the “idolatrous priests”^{f344} the very name shall be cut off, as God promises by Hosea, that

He will “take away the names of Baalim” (^{<207>}Hosea 2:17), and by Zechariah, that He “will cut off the names of the idols out of the land” (^{<312>}Zechariah 13:2). Yet this is more. Not the “name” only “of the Chemarim,” but themselves with their name, their posterity, shall be blotted out; still more, it is God who cuts off all memory of them, blotting them out of the book of the living and out of His own. They had but a name before, “that they were living, but were dead” (^{<601>}Revelation 3:1). Jerome: “The Lord shall take away names of vain glory, wrongly admired, out of the Church yea, the very names of the priests with the priests who vainly flatter themselves with the name of Bishops and the dignity of Presbyters without their deeds. Whence he markedly says, not, “and the deeds of priests with the priests,” but the “names;” who only bear the false name, of dignities, and with evil works destroy their own names.” The “priests are priests of the Lord,” who live not like priests, corrupt in life and doctrine and corrupters of God’s people (see ^{<248>}Jeremiah 2:8;5:31). The judgment is pronounced alike on what was intrinsically evil, and on good which had corrupted itself into evil. The title of priest is no where given to the priest of a false God, without some mention in the context, implying that they were idolatrous priests; as the priests of Dagon (^{<985>}1 Samuel 5:5), of the high places as ordained by Jeroboam (^{<113>}1 Kings 13:2,33; ^{<1231>}2 Kings 23:20; ^{<4115>}2 Chronicles 11:15), of Baal (^{<1209>}2 Kings 10:19; 11:18; ^{<4217>}2 Chronicles 23:17), of Bethel (^{<370>}Amos 7:10), of Ahab (^{<1201>}2 Kings 10:11), of those who were not gods (^{<4139>}2 Chronicles 13:9), of On, where the sun was worshiped (^{<445>}Genesis 41:45-50, etc. The name “Potipherah,” probably belonging to “Phre,” implies this). “The priests” then were God’s priests, who in the evil days of Manasseh had manifoldly corrupted their life or their faith, and who were still evil. The “priests” of Judah, with its kings its princes and the people of the land, were in Jeremiah’s inaugural vision enumerated as those, who “shall,” God says, “fight against thee, but shall not prevail against thee” (^{<2418>}Jeremiah 1:18,19). “The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not” (^{<2417>}Jeremiah 2:7,8). In the general corruption, “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule at their hands” (^{<2459>}Jeremiah 5:30,31): “the children of Israel and the children of Judah, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, have turned unto Me the back, and not the face” (^{<2422>}Jeremiah 32:32,33). Jeremiah speaks specifically of heavy moral sins. “From the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely” (^{<2463>}Jeremiah 6:13; 8:10); “both

prophet and priest are profane” (^{<2231>}Jeremiah 23:11); “for the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her” (^{<2343>}Lamentations 4:13). And Isaiah says of her sensuality; “the priests and the prophets have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine; they are out of the way through strong drink” (^{<2337>}Isaiah 28:7).

^{<3005>}**Zephaniah 1:5.** *And them that worship the best of heaven upon the* (flat) *housetops* This was fulfilled by Josiah who destroyed “the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz” (^{<12312>}2 Kings 23:12). Jeremiah speaks as if this worship was almost universal, as though well-near every roof had been profaned by this idolatry. “The houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of Judah, shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burned incense unto all the host of heaven, and have poured out drink-offerings unto other gods” (^{<2493>}Jeremiah 19:13). “The Chaldeans that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger” (^{<2429>}Jeremiah 32:29). They worshiped on the house-tops, probably to have a clearer view of that magnificent expanse of sky, “the moon and stars which” God had “ordained” (^{<1908>}Psalms 8:3); the “queen of heaven,” which they worshiped instead of Himself. There is something so mysterious in that calm face of the moon, as it “walketh in beauty” (^{<18716>}Job 31:26); God seems to have invested it with such delegated influence over the seasons and the produce of the earth, that they stopped short in it, and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. Much as men now talk of “Nature,” admire “Nature,” speak of its “laws,” not as laws imposed upon it, but inherent in it, laws affecting us and our well-being; only not in their ever-varying vicissitudes, “doing whatsoever God commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth, whether for correction, or for His land or for mercy!” (^{<18712>}Job 37:12,13). The idolaters “worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever” (^{<16025>}Romans 1:25); moderns equally make this world their object, only they idolize themselves and their discoveries, and worship their own intellect.

This worship on the house-tops individualized the public idolatry; it was a rebellion against God, family by family; a sort of family-prayer of idolatry. “Did we,” say the mingled multitude to Jeremiah, “make our cakes to worship her, and pour out our drink-offerings unto her, without our men?” (^{<2449>}Jeremiah 44:19). Its family character is described in Jeremiah. “The

children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods" (^{<2478>}Jeremiah 7:18). The idolatry spread to other cities. "We will certainly do," they say, "as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem" (^{<2447>}Jeremiah 44:17). The incense went up continually "as a memorial to God" from the altar of incense in the temple: the "roofs of the houses" were so many altars, from which, street by street and house by house the incense went up to her, for whom they dethroned God, "the queen of heaven." It was an idolatry, with which Judah was especially besotted, believing that they received all goods of this world from them and not from God. When punished for their sin, they repented of their partial repentance and maintained to Jeremiah that they were punished for "leaving off to burn incense to the queen of heaven" (^{<2442>}Jeremiah 44:2,15,18).

And them that worship ... the Lord but with a divided heart and service; "that swear by (rather (As in the English margin, compare ^{<4454>}2 Chronicles 15:14; ^{<2398>}Isaiah 19:18; 45:23. It can only mean this) to) the Lord," swear fealty and loyal allegiance to Him, while they do acts which deny it, in that "they swear by Malcham," better (it is no appellative although allied to one) "their king" (^{<3163>}Amos 5:26 and ^{<2401>}Jeremiah 49:1,3, where the English Version too renders, their king. On his worship see vol. i. pp. 301-303), most probably, I think, "Moloch."

This idolatry had been their enduring idolatry in the wilderness, after the calves had been annihilated; it is "the" worship, against which Israel is warned by name in the law (^{<2821>}Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-4); then, throughout the history of the Judges, we hear of the kindred idolatry of Baal (Always used with the article expressed or understood, unless the specific name (Bael-berith, Bael-zebub, Bael-peor) is mentioned), "the" Lord (who was called also (Numid. 1,2,3 in Ges. Thes. p. 795) "eternal king" and from whom individuals named themselves "son of (the) king," "servant of (the) king" (ap. Gesenius, loc. cit.)), or the manifold Baals (in Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Hosea) and Ashtaroth or Astarte. But after these had been removed on the preaching of Samuel (^{<9006>}1 Samuel 7:6; 12:10), this idolatry does not reappear in Judah until the intermarriage of Jehoram with the house of Ahab (^{<2186>}2 Kings 8:16-18,26,27; ^{<3406>}2 Chronicles 21:6,12,13; 22:2-4). The kindred and equally horrible worship of "Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon" (^{<3110>}1 Kings 11:7),

was brought in by Solomon in his decay, and endured until his high place was defiled by Josiah (^{<12313>}2 Kings 23:13,14). It is probable then that this was “their king” (Molech is always an appellative, except ^{<11107>}1 Kings 11:7. As a proper name, it is Milcom, ^{<11105>}1 Kings 11:5,33; ^{<12313>}2 Kings 23:13), of whom Zephaniah speaks, whom Amos (See the note at ^{<3000>}Amos 1:15.) and after him Jeremiah, called “their king;” but speaking of Ammon. Him, the king of Ammon, Judah adopted as “their king.” They owned God as their king in words; Molech they owned by their deeds; “they worshiped and swore fealty to the Lord” and they “swore by their king;” his name was familiarly in their mouths; to him they appealed as the Judge and witness of the truth of their words, his displeasure they invoked on themselves, if they swore falsely. Cyril: “Those in error were wont to swear by heaven, and, as matter of reverence to call out, ‘By the king and lord Sun.’ Those who do so must of set purpose and willfully depart from the love of God, since the law expressly says, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve Him alone, and swear by His Name” (^{<1813>}Deuteronomy 6:13).

The former class who “worshipped on the roofs” were mere idolaters. These “worshiped,” as they thought, “the Lord,” bound themselves solemnly by oath to Him, but with a reserve, joining a hateful idol to Him, in that they, by a religious act, owned it too as god. The act which they did was in direct words, or by implication, forbidden by God. The command to “swear by the Lord” implied that they were to swear by none else. It was followed by the prohibition to go after other gods. (^{<1813>}Deuteronomy 6:13,14; 10:30, compare ^{<2356>}Isaiah 65:16; ^{<2401>}Jeremiah 4:2). Contrariwise, to swear by other gods was forbidden as a part of their service. “Be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, but cleave unto the Lord your God” (^{<12315>}Joshua 23:6-8; compare ^{<3084>}Amos 8:14). “How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken Me, and have sworn by those who are no gods” (^{<2187>}Jeremiah 5:7). “They taught My people to swear by Baal” (^{<2426>}Jeremiah 12:16). They thought perhaps that in that they professed to serve God, did the greater homage to Him, professed and bound themselves to be His, (such is the meaning of “swear to the Lord”) they might, without renouncing His service, do certain things, “swear by their king;” although in effect they thereby owned hint also as god. To such Elijah said, “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him” (^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:21); and God by

Jeremiah rejects with abhorrence such divided service. “Ye trust in lying words, which will not profit. Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, saying, We are delivered to do all these abominations” (^{<2008>}Jeremiah 7:8-10). And Hosea, “Neither go ye to Beth-aven, and swear there, The Lord liveth” (^{<2045>}Hosea 4:15).

Such are Christians, Jerome: “who think that they can serve together the world and the Lord, and please two masters, God and Mammom; who, “being soldiers of Jesus Christ” and having sworn fealty to Him, “entangle themselves with the affairs of this life and offer the same image to God and to Caesar” (^{<5012>}2 Timothy 2:3,4). To such, God, whom with their lips they own, is not their God; their idol is, as the very name says, “their king,” whom alone they please, displeasing and dishonoring God. We must not only fear, love, honor God, but love, fear, honor all beside for Him Alone.

^{<3006>}**Zephaniah 1:6.** *And them that are turned back from* (Literally, have turned themselves back from following after) *the Lord* From this half-service, the prophet goes on to the avowed neglect of God, by such as wholly fall away from Him, not setting His will or law before them, “but turning away from” Him. It is their misery that they were set in the right way once, but themselves “turned themselves back,” now no longer “following” God, but “their own lusts, drawn away and enticed” (^{<5014>}James 1:14) by them. How much more Christians, before whose eyes Christ Jesus is set forth, not as a Redeemer only but as an Example that they should “follow His steps!” (^{<4022>}1 Peter 2:21).

And those that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for Him This is marked to be a distinct class. “And those who.” These did not openly break with God, or turn away overtly from Him; they kept (as men think) on good terms with Him, but, like “the slothful servant,” rendered Him a listless heartless service. Both words express diligent search. God is not found then in a careless way. They who “seek” Him not “diligently” (^{<4018>}Matthew 2:8), do not find Him. “Strive,” our Lord says, “to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (^{<4134>}Luke 13:24). She who had lost the one piece of silver, “sought” “diligently” (^{<4158>}Luke 15:8), until she had found it.

Thus, he has gone through the whole cycle. First, that most horrible and cruel worship of Baal, the idolatrous priests and those who had the name

of priests only, mingled with them, yet not openly apostatizing; then the milder form of idolatry, the star-worshippers; then those who would unite the worship of God with idols, who held themselves to be worshipers of God, but whose real king was their idol; then those who openly abandoned God; and lastly those who held with Him, just to satisfy their conscience-qualms, but with no heart-service. And so, in words of Habakkuk and in reminiscence of his awful summons of the whole world before God, he sums up;

3007 Zephaniah 1:7. *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God* (Literally, “Hush,” in awe “from the face of God.”) In the presence of God, even the righteous say from their inmost heart, “I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” (**3804** Job 40:4). “Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 43:5,6). “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified” (**3433** Psalm 143:2). How much more must the “man without the wedding garment be speechless” (**4021** Matthew 22:11,12), and every false plea, with which he deceived himself, melt away before the Face of God! The voice of God’s Judgment echoes in every heart, “we indeed justly” (**4234** Luke 23:41).

For the Day of the Lord is at hand Zephaniah, as is his custom, grounds this summons, which he had renewed from Habakkuk, to hushed silence before God, on Joel’s prophetic warning (See the note at **3014** Joel 1:14 and **3015** Joel 2:1), to show that it was not yet exhausted. A day of the Lord, of which Joel warned, had come and was gone; but it was only the herald of many such days; judgments in time, heralds and earnest, and, in their degree, pictures of the last which shall end time.

Dionysius: “All time is God’s, since He Alone is the Lord of time; yet that is specially said to be His time when He doth anything special. Whence He saith, “My time is not yet come” (**4306** John 7:6); whereas all time is His.” The Day of the Lord is, in the first instance, Jerome: “the day of captivity and vengeance on the sinful people,” as a forerunner of the Day of Judgment, or the day of death to each, for this too is near, since, compared to eternity, all the time of this world is brief.

For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice God had rejected sacrifices, offered amid unrepented sin; they were “an abomination to Him” (**3011** Isaiah 1:11-15). When man will not repent and offer himself as “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (**4511** Romans 12:1), God, at last, rejects all other

outward oblations, and the sinner himself is the sacrifice and victim of his own sins. The image was probably suggested by Isaiah's words, "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 34:6); and Jeremiah subsequently uses it of the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Euphrates, "This is the day of the Lord of Hosts; that He may avenge Him of His adversaries, for the Lord God hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates" (²⁴⁶⁰Jeremiah 46:10). "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil" (²¹⁶⁴Proverbs 16:4). All must honor God, either fulfilling the will of God and the end of their own being and of His love for them, by obeying that loving will with their own freewill, or, if they repudiate it to the end, by suffering it.

He hath bid His guests (Literally, sanctified) (See the English margin) God had before, by Isaiah, called the pagan whom He employed to punish Babylon, "My sanctified ones" (²³³⁸Isaiah 13:3). Zephaniah, by giving the title to God's instruments against Judah, declares that themselves, having become in deeds like the pagan, were as pagan to Him. The instruments of His displeasure, not they, were so far his chosen, His called. Jeremiah repeats the saying, "Thus saith the Lord against the house of the king of Judah; ... I have sanctified against thee destroyers, a man and his weapons" (²²⁷⁶Jeremiah 22:6,7). That is, so far, a holy war in the purpose of God, which fulfills His will; from where Nebuchadnezzar was "His servant" (²²⁵⁹Jeremiah 25:9), avenging His wrongs (See the notes at ²¹⁹⁸Joel 3:9 and ²³⁸⁵Micah 3:5). Cyril:

"To be sanctified, here denotes not the laying aside of iniquity, nor the participation of the Holy Spirit, but, as it were, to be foreordained and chosen to the fulfillment of this end."

That is in a manner hallowed, which is employed by God for a holy end, though the instrument, its purposes, its aims, its passions, be in themselves unholy. There is an awe about "the scourges of God." As with the lightning and the tornado, there is a certain presence of God with them, in that through them His Righteousness is seen; although they themselves have as little of God as the "wind and storm" which "fulfill His word." Those who were once admitted to make offerings to God make themselves sacrifices to His wrath; these, still pagan and ungodly and in all besides reprobate, are His priests, because in this, although without their will, they do His will.

Zephaniah 1:8. *I will punish* (Literally, visit upon). God seems oftentimes to be away from His own world. People plot, design, say, in word or in deed, “who is Lord over us?” God is, as it were, a stranger in it, or as a man, who hath “taken a journey into afar country.” God uses our own language to us. “I will visit,” inspecting (so to say), examining, sifting, reviewing, and when man’s sins require it, allowing the weight of His displeasure to fall upon them.

The princes The prophet again, in vivid detail (as his characteristic is), sets forth together sin and punishment. Amid the general chastisement of all, when all should become one sacrifice, they who sinned most should be punished most. The evil priests had received their doom. Here he begins anew with the mighty of the people and so goes down, first to special spots of the city, then to the whole, man by man. Josiah being a godly king, no mention is made of him. Thirteen years before his death, he received the promise of God, “because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord — I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered unto thy grave in peace, and thou shalt not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place” (⁴²²⁹2 Kings 22:19,20). In remarkable contrast to Jeremiah, who had to be, in detail and continual pleading with his people, a prophet of judgment to come, until these judgments broke upon them, and so was the reprovener of the evil sovereigns who succeeded Josiah, Zephaniah has to pronounce God’s judgments only on the “princes” and “the king’s children.” Jeremiah, in his inaugural vision, was forewarned, that “the kings Judah, its princes, priests, and the people of the land” (³⁴¹⁸Jeremiah 1:18) should war against him, because he should speak unto them all which God should command him. And thenceforth, Jeremiah impleads or threatens kings and the princes together (³⁴²⁶Jeremiah 2:26; 4:9; 8:1; 24:8; 32:37; 34:21). Zephaniah contrariwise, his office lying wholly within the reign of Josiah, describes the princes again as “roaring lions” (³⁴¹⁸Zephaniah 3:3), but says nothing of the king, as neither does Micah (³⁴¹⁸Micah 3:1,9), in the reign, it may be, of Jotham or Hezekiah. Isaiah speaks of princes, as “rebellious and companions of thieves” (²⁴¹³Isaiah 1:23). Jeremiah speaks of them as idolaters (²⁴¹³Jeremiah 31:32-34; 44:21). They appear to have had considerable influence, which on one occasion they employed in defense of Jeremiah (²⁴¹⁶Jeremiah 26:16), but mostly for evil (²⁴¹⁵Jeremiah 37:15; 38:4,16). Zedekiah inquired of Jeremiah secretly for fear of them (²⁴¹⁷Jeremiah 37:17; 38:14-27). They brought destruction upon themselves by what men praise, their resistance

to Nebuchadnezzar, but against the declared mind of God.

Nebuchadnezzar unwittingly fulfilled the prophets' word, when he "slew all the nobles of Judah, the eunuch who was over the war, and seven men of them that were near the king's person, and the principal scribe of the host" (^{<2306>}Jeremiah 39:6; 52:25-27).

And the king's children Holy Scripture mentions chief persons only by name. Isaiah had prophesied the isolated lonely loveless lot of descendants of Hezekiah who should be "eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (^{<2307>}Isaiah 39:7), associated only with those intriguing pests of Eastern courts, a lot in itself worse than the sword (although to Daniel God overruled it to good) and Zedekiah's sons were slain before his eyes and his race extinct. Jehoiakim died a disgraced death, and Jehoiachin was imprisoned more than half the life of man.

And all such as are clothed with strange apparel Israel was reminded by its dress, that it belonged to God. It was no great thing in itself; "a band of dark blue" (^{<0453>}Numbers 15:38; ^{<1621>}Deuteronomy 22:12) upon the fringes at the four corners of their garments." But "the band of dark blue" was upon the high priest's mitre, with the plate engraved, "Holiness to the Lord" (^{<0236>}Exodus 28:36), fastened upon it; "with a band of dark blue" also was the breastplate (^{<0321>}Exodus 39:21) bound to the ephod of the high priest. So then, simple as it was, it seems to have designated the whole nation, as "a kingdom of priests, an holy nation" (^{<0206>}Exodus 19:6). It was appointed to them, "that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring; that ye may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God" (^{<0453>}Numbers 15:39,40). They might say, "it is but "a band of blue;" but the "band of blue" was the soldier's badge, which marked them as devoted to the service of their God; indifference to or shame of it involved indifference to or shame of the charge given them therewith, and to their calling as a peculiar people. The choice of the strange apparel involved the choice to be as the nations of the world; "we will be as the pagan, as the families of the countries" (^{<2503>}Ezekiel 20:33).

All luxurious times copy foreign dress, and with it, foreign manners and luxuries; from where even the pagan Romans were zealous against its use. It is very probable that with the foreign dress foreign idolatry was imported (Jonathan, Rashi and Jerome connect it with idolatry). The Babylonian

dress was very gorgeous, such as was the admiration of the simpler Jews. “Her captains and rulers clothed in perfection, girded with girdles upon their loins, with flowing dyed attire upon their heads” (³⁶³²Ezekiel 23:12,15). Ezekiel had to frame words to express the Hebrew idea of their beauty. Jehoiakim is reprov'd among other things for his luxury (³²¹⁴Jeremiah 22:14,15). Outward dress always betokens the inward mind, and in its turn acts upon it. An estranged dress betokened an estranged heart, from where it is used as an image of the whole spiritual mind (⁴¹³⁴Romans 13:14; ⁵¹⁸²Colossians 3:12; ⁴⁰²¹Ephesians 4:24). Jerome: “The garment of the sons of the king and the apparel of princes which we receive in Baptism, is Christ, according to that, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and “Put ye on bowels of mercy, goodness, humililty, patience,” and the rest. Wherein, we are commanded to be clothed with the new man from heaven according to our Creator, and to “lay aside” the clothing of “the old man with his deeds” (⁴⁰²²Ephesians 4:22). Whereas, then we ought to be clothed in such raiment, for mercy we put on cruelty, for patience, impatience, for righteousness, iniquity; in a word, for virtues, vices, for Christ, antichrist. Whence it is said of such an one, “He is clothed with cursing as with a garment” (³⁹⁰⁷Psalms 109:17). These the Lord will visit most manifestly at His Coming.” Rup.: “Thinkest thou that hypocrisy is “strange apparel?” Of a truth. For what stranger apparel than sheeps’ clothing to ravening wolves? What stranger than for him who “within is full of iniquity, to appear outwardly righteous before men?” (⁴¹²⁸Matthew 23:28).

³⁰⁰⁹**Zephaniah 1:9.** *I will punish all those that leap on the threshold*

Neither language nor history nor context allow this to be understood of the idolatrous custom of Ashdod, not to tread on the threshold^{f345} of the temple of Dagon. It had indeed been a strange infatuation of idolatry, that God’s people should adopt an act of superstitious reverence for an idol in the very instance in which its nothingness and the power of the true God had been shown. Nothing is indeed too brutish for one who chooses an idol for the true God, preferring Satan to the good God. Yet, the superstition belonged apparently to Ashdod alone; the worship of Dagon, although another form of untrue worship, does not appear, like that of Baal, to have fascinated the Jews; nor would Zephaniah, to express a rare superstition, have chosen an idiom, which might more readily express the contrary, that they “leapt “on” the threshold,” not over it. They are also the same persons, who “leap on the threshold,” and who “fill their masters’ houses

with violence and deceit.” Yet, this relates, not to superstition, but to plunder and goods unjustly gotten. As then, before, he had declared God’s judgments upon idolatry, so does he here upon sins against the second table, whether by open violence, or secret fraud, as do also Habakkuk (^{<300D>}Habakkuk 1:2,3), and Jeremiah (^{<248Z>}Jeremiah 5:27). All, whether open or hidden from man, every wrongful dealing, (for every sin as to a neighbor’s goods falls under these two, violence or fraud) shall be avenged in that day. Here again all which remains is the sin. They enriched, as they thought, their masters by art or by force; they schemed, plotted, robbed; they succeeded to their heart’s wish; but, “ill-gotten, ill-spent!” They “filled their masters’ houses” quite full; but wherewith? with violence and deceit, which witnessed against them, and brought down the judgments of God upon them.

^{<300D>}**Zephaniah 1:10.** *A cry from the fish-gate* “The fish-gate” was probably in the north of the wall of “the second city.” For in Nehemiah’s rebuilding, the restoration began at the sheep-gate (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:1) (so called doubtless, because the sheep for the sacrifices were brought in by it), which, as being near the temple, was repaired by the priests; then it ascended northward, by two towers, the towers of Meah and Hananeel; then two companies repaired some undescribed part of the wall (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:2), and then another company built the fish-gate (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:3). Four companies are then mentioned, who repaired, in order, to the old gate, which was repaired by another company (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:4-6). Three more companies repaired beyond these; and they left Jerusalem unto the broad wall (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:7,8). After three more sections repaired by individuals, two others repaired a second measured portion, and the tower of the furnaces (^{<148B>}Nehemiah 3:9-11). This order is reversed in the account of the dedication of the walls. The people being divided “into two great companies of them that give thanks” (^{<142B>}Nehemiah 12:31-38), some place near “the tower of the furnaces” was the central point, from which both parted to encompass the city in opposite directions. In this account, we have two additional gates mentioned, “the gate of Ephraim” (^{<142B>}Nehemiah 12:39), between the “broad wall” and the “old gate,” and “the prison-gate,” beyond “the sheep-gate,” from which the repairs had begun. “The gate of Ephraim” had obviously not been repaired, because, for some reason, it had not been destroyed. Elsewhere, Nehemiah, who describes the rebuilding of the wall so minutely, must have mentioned its rebuilding. It was obviously to the north, as leading to Ephraim. But the

tower of Hananeel must have been a very marked tower. In Zechariah Jerusalem is measured from north to south, “from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses” (³⁸⁴⁰Zechariah 14:10). It was then itself at the northeast corner of Jerusalem, where towers were of most importance to strengthen the wall, and to command the approach to the wall either way. “The fish-gate” then, lying between it and “the gate of Ephraim,” must have been on the north side of the city, and so on the side where the Chaldaean invasions came; yet it must have been much inside the present city, because the city itself was enlarged by Herod Agrippa on the north, as it was unaccountably contracted on the south. The then limits of Jerusalem are defined. For Josephus thus describes “the second wall.” (B. J. v. 42): “It took its beginning from that gate which they called “Gennath,” which belonged to the first wall; it only encompassed the northern quarter of the city and reached as far as the tower of Antonia.” The tower of Antonia was situated at the northwest angle of the corner of the temple. The other end of the wall, the Gennath or “garden” gate, must have opened on cultivated land; and Josephus speaks of the gardens on the north and northwest of the city which were destroyed by Titus in leveling the ground (B. J. v. 32). But near the tower of Hippicus, the northwestern extremity of the first wall, no ancient remains have been discovered by excavation,^{f346} but they have been traced north, from “an ancient Jewish semi-circular arch, resting on piers 18 feet high, now buried in rubbish.” These old foundations have been traced at three places^{f347} in a line on the east of the Holy Sepulchre (which lay consequently outside the city) up to the judgment gate, but not north of it.^{f348} The line from west to east, that is, to the tower of Antonia, is marked generally by “very large stones, evidently of Jewish work, in the walls of houses, especially in the lower parts”.^{f349} They are chiefly in the line of the Via Dolorosa.

“The fish-gate” had its name probably from a fish-market (markets being in the open places near the gates (see ¹³⁰⁰2 Kings 7:1; ¹⁶³⁶Nehemiah 13:16,19)) the fish being brought either from the lake of Tiberius or from Joppa. Near it, the wall ended, which Manasseh, after his restoration from Babylon, “built without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley” (¹⁶³⁴2 Chronicles 33:14). This, being unprotected by its situation, was the weakest part of the city. (Josephus, de B. J. v. 4. 2): “The most ancient of the three walls could be considered as impregnable, as much on account of its extreme thickness, as of the height of the mountain on which it was built, and the depth of the valleys at its base, and David, Solomon

and the other kings neglected nothing to place it in this state.” Where they had made themselves strong, there God’s judgment should find them.

And a howling from the second city, as it is supplied in Nehemiah, who mentions the prefect set over it.^{f350} It was here that Huldah the prophetess lived (~~1224~~2 Kings 22:14; ~~1492~~2 Chronicles 34:22. It is called by Josephus, “another” city, Ant. xv. 11,5), who prophesied the evils to come upon Jerusalem, after Josiah should be “gathered to” his “grave in peace.” It was probably the lower city, which was enclosed by the second wall. It was a second or new city, as compared to the original city of David, on Mount Moriah. On this the enemy who had penetrated by the fish-gate would first enter; then take the strongest part of the city itself. Gareb (~~2413~~Jeremiah 31:39) and Bezetha were outside of the then town; they would then be already occupied by the enemy before entering the city.

A great crashing from the hills These are probably Zion, and Mount Moriah on which the temple stood, and so the capture is described as complete. Here should be not a cry or howling only, but an utter destruction.^{f351} Mount Moriah was the seat of the worship of God; on Mount Zion was the state, and the abode of the wealthy. In human sight they were impregnable. The Jebusites mocked at David’s siege, as thinking their city impregnable (~~3086~~2 Samuel 5:6); but God was with David and he took it. He and his successors fortified it yet more, but its true defense was that the Lord was round about His people” (~~3930~~Psalm 125:2), and when He withdrew His protection, then this natural strength was but their destruction, tempting them to resist first the Chaldaeans, then the Romans. Human strength is but a great crash, falling by its own weight and burying its owner.

“This threefold cry (From Rup.), from three parts of the city, had a fulfillment before the destruction by the Romans. In the lower part of the city Simon tyrannized, and in the middle John raged, and “there was a great crashing from the hills,” that is, from the temple and citadel where was Eleazar, who stained the very altar of the temple with blood, and in the courts of the Lord made a pool of blood of divers corpses.”

Cyril:

“In the assaults of an enemy the inhabitants are ever wont to flee to the tops of the hills, thinking that the difficulty of access will be a

hindrance to him, and will cut off the assaults of the pursuers. But when God smiteth, and requireth of the despisers the penalties of their sin, not the most towered city nor impregnable circuits of walls, not height of hills, or rough rocks, or pathless difficulty of ground, will avail to the sufferers. Repentance alone saves, softening the Judge and allaying His wrath, and readily inviting the Creator in His inherent goodness to His appropriate gentleness. Better is it, with all our might to implore that we may not offend Him. But since human nature is prone to evil, and “in many things we all offend” (^{<3012>}James 3:2), let us at least by repentance invite to His wonted clemency the Lord of all, Who is by nature kind.”

^{<3011>}**Zephaniah 1:11.** *Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh* Literally, “Mortar” (^{<3012>}Proverbs 27:22. It is also a proper name in ^{<301519>}Judges 15:19, since Lehi in which it was situate, was a proper name, ^{<301519>}Judges 15:9,14,19), “in which,” Jerome says, “corn is pounded; a hollow vessel, and fit for the use of medical men, in which properly ptisans are wont to be beaten (or made). Striking is it, that Scripture saith not, ‘who dwell in the valley or in the alley,’ but who “dwell in the mortar,” because as corn, when the pestle striketh, is bruised, so the army of the enemy shall rush down upon you” (Jerome). The place intended is probably so much of the valley of the Tyropoeon, which intersected Jerusalem from north to south, as was enclosed by the second wall, on the north, and the first wall on the south. The valley (See Signor Pierotti’s map) “extended as far as the fountain of Siloam,” and united with the valley of Jehoshaphat a little below Ophel. It was (Josephus, B. J. v. 4. 1) “full of houses,” and, from its name as well as from its situation, it was probably the scene of petty merchandise, where the occasions in which men could and did break the law and offend God, were the more continual, because they entered into their daily life, and were a part of it. The sound of the pestle was continually heard there; another sound should thereafter be heard, when they should not bruise, but be themselves bruised. The name “Maktesh” was probably chosen to express how their false hopes, grounded on the presence of God’s temple among them while by their sins they profaned it, should be turned into true fears. They had been and thought themselves “Mikdash,” “a holy place, sanctuary;” they should be Maktesh (The two words do so occur in an epistle of the Samaritans (Cellar. Epist. Sichemit. p. 25) Gesenius), wherein all should be utterly bruised in pieces.

Jerome:

“Whoso considereth the calamities of that siege, and how the city was pressed and hemmed in, will feel how aptly he calls them “the inhabitants of a mortar;” for, as grains of corn are brought together into a mortar, to the end that, when the pestle descendeth, being unable to fly off, they may be bruised, so the people flowing together, out of all the countries of Judaea, was narrowed in by a sudden siege, and through the savage cruelty of the above leaders of the sedition, was unutterably tortured from within, more than by the enemy without.”

For all the merchant people are cut down (Literally, “the people of Canaan”) that is Ch.: “they who in deeds are like the people of Canaan,” according to that (History of Susannah 56), “Thou art of Canaan and not of Judah,” and, “Thy father is an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite” (~~2343~~ Ezekiel 16:3. See also the note at ~~2827~~ Hosea 12:7, ab. p. 121). So our Lord says to the reprobate Jews, “Ye are of your father the devil” (~~2384~~ John 8:44).

All they that bear silver are cut off (Literally, “all laden with”). The silver, wherewith they lade themselves, being gotten amiss, is a load upon them, weighing them down until they are destroyed.

~~2312~~ **Zephaniah 1:12.** *I will search* (Literally, “diligently”). The word is always used of a minute diligent search, whereby places, persons, things, are searched and sifted one by one in every corner, until it be found whether a thing be there or no.^{f352} Hence, also of the searching out of every thought of the heart, either by God (~~2307~~ Proverbs 20:27), or in repentance by the light of God (~~2380~~ Lamentations 3:40).

Jerusalem with candles so that there should be no corner, no lurking-place so dark, but that the guilty should be brought to light. The same diligence, which Eternal Wisdom used, to “seek and to save that which was lost” (~~2358~~ Luke 15:8), lighting a candle and searching diligently,” until it find each lost piece of silver, the same shall Almighty God use that no hardened sinner shall escape. Cyril: “What the enemy would do, using unmingled phrensy against the conquered, that God fitteth to His own Person, not as being Himself the Doer of things so foreign, but rather permitting that what comes from anger should proceed in judgment against the ungodly.” It was an image of this, when, at the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans, they (Jerome, see Josephus, de B. J. vi. 94, vii. 2 fin.) “dragged out of common sewers and holes and caves and tombs, princes and great men and priests,

who for fear of death had hid themselves.” How much more in that Day when “the secrets of all hearts shalt be revealed” by Him who “searcheth the hearts and reins, and to Whose Eyes” (^{<3070>}Psalm 7:9; 26:2; ^{<3110>}Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; ^{<6023>}Revelation 2:23), “which are like flashing Fire, all things are naked and open!” (^{<6014>}Revelation 1:14). The candles wherewith God searcheth the heart, are men’s own consciences (^{<3107>}Proverbs 20:27), His Own revealed word (^{<3390>}Psalm 119:104; ^{<3023>}Proverbs 6:23; ^{<6019>}2 Peter 1:19), the lives of true Christians (^{<3045>}Philippians 2:15). Those, through the Holy Spirit in each, may enlighten the heart of man, or, if he takes not heed, will rise in judgment against him, and show the falsehood of all vain excuses. (Bern, Serm. 55 in Song of Solomon): “One way of escape only there is. If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. I will “search out my” own “ways” and my desires, that He who “shall search out Jerusalem with candles,” may find nothing in me, unsought and unsifted. For He will not twice judge the same thing. Would that I might so follow and track out all my offences, that in none I need fear His piercing Eyes, in none be ashamed at the light of His candles! Now I am seen, but I see not. At hand is that Eye, to whom all things are open, although Itself is not open. Once “I shall know, even as I am known” (^{<4632>}1 Corinthians 13:12). Now “I know in part,” but I am not known in part, but wholly.”

The men that are settled on their lees Stiffened and contracted.^{f353} The image is from wine which becomes harsh, if allowed to remain upon the lees, unremoved. It is drawn out by Jeremiah, “Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed” (^{<2481>}Jeremiah 48:11). So they upon whom “no changes come, fear not God (see ^{<3559>}Psalm 55:19). The lees are the refuse of the wine, yet stored up (so the word means) with it, and the wine rests, as it were, upon them. So do men of ease rest in things defiled and defiling, their riches or their pleasure, which they hoard up, on which they are bent, so that they, Dionysius: “lift not their mind to things above, but, darkened with foulest desires, are hardened and stiffened in sin.”

That say in their heart Not openly scoffing, perhaps thinking that they believe; but people “do” believe as they love. Their most inward belief, the belief of their heart and affections, what they wish, and the hidden spring of their actions, is, “The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.” They act as believing so, and by acting inure themselves to believe it. They think

of God as far away, “Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick goads are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven” (^{<1802>}Job 22:12-14), “The ungodly in the pride of his heart” (thinketh); “He will not inquire; all his devices” (speak), “There is no God. Strong are his ways at all times; on high are Thy judgments out of his sight” (^{<1904>}Psalms 10:4,5). “They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless, and they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it” (^{<1945>}Psalms 94:5,6). “Such things they did imagine and were deceived, for their own wickedness blinded them. As for the mysteries of God, they knew them not” (Wisdom 2:21-22). “Faith without works is dead” (^{<5121>}James 2:20). Faith which acts not dies out, and there comes in its stead this other persuasion, that God will not repay. There are more Atheists than believe themselves to be such. These act as if there were no Judge of their deeds, and at last come, themselves to believe that God will not punish (^{<2359>}Isaiah 5:19; ^{<3427>}Malachi 2:17). What else is the thought of all worldlings, of all who make idols to themselves of any pleasure or gain or ambition, but “God will not punish?” “God cannot punish the (wrongful, selfish,) indulgence of the nature which He has made.” “God will not be so precise.” “God will not punish with everlasting severance from Him, the sins of this short life.” And they see not that they ascribe to God, what He attributes to idols that is, not-gods. “Do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and behold it together” (^{<2342>}Isaiah 41:23. Perhaps Zephaniah meant to suggest this by using words which God by Isaiah had used of idols). “Be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good” (^{<2405>}Jeremiah 10:5). These think not that God does good, for they ascribe their success to their own diligence, wisdom, strength, and thank not God for it. They think not that He sends them evil. For they defy Him and His laws, and think that they shall go unpunished. What remains but that He should be as dumb an idol as those of the pagan?

^{<3013>}**Zephaniah 1:13.** *Therefore their goods* Literally, “And their strength.” It is the simple sequel in God’s Providence. It is a continued narrative. God will visit those who say, that God does not interfere in man’s affairs, and, it shall be seen (^{<2443>}Jeremiah 44:28) whose words shall stand, God’s or their’s. All which God had threatened in the law shall be fulfilled. God, in the fulfillment of the punishment, which He had foretold in the law (^{<1362>}Leviticus 26:32,33; Deuteronomy 28), would vindicate not

only His present Providence, but His continual government of His own world. All which is strength to man, shall the rather fail, because it is strength, and they presume on it and it deceives them. Its one end is to “become a prey” of devils. Riches, learning, rule, influence, power, bodily strength, genius, eloquence, popular favor, shall all fail a man, and he, when stripped of them, shall be the more bared because he gathered them around him. “Wealth is ever a runaway and has no stability, but rather intoxicates and inclines to revolt and has unsteady feet. Exceeding folly is it to think much of it. For it will not rescue those lying under the divine displeasure, nor will it free any from guilt, when God decreeth punishment, and bringeth the judgment befitting on the transgressors. How utterly useless this eagerness after wealth is to the ungodly, he teacheth, saying, that “their strength shall be a prey” to the Chaldaean.”

And their houses a desolation Cyril: “For they are, of whom it may be said very truly, “This is the man that took not God for his strength, but trusted unto the multitude of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness” (~~1937~~ Psalm 52:7). But if indeed their houses are adorned in a costly manner, they shall not be theirs, for they shall be burned, and themselves go into captivity, leaving all in their house, and deprived of all which would gladden. And this God said clearly to the king of Judah by Jeremiah, “Thou hast builded thyself a large house and wide chambers, ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign because thou closest thyself with cedar!” (~~2024~~ Jeremiah 22:14,15). Gregory (Mor. viii. 14): “As the house of the body is the bodily dwelling, so to each mind its house is that, wherein through desire it is wont to dwell,” and “desolate” shall they be, being severed forever from the things they desired, and forever deserted by God. “They shall also build houses but not inhabit them,” as the rich man said to his soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.... Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (~~2129~~ Luke 12:19,20). Before the siege by the Romans, Jerusalem and the temple had been greatly beautified, only to be destroyed. “And they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.” This is the woe, first pronounced in the law (~~1839~~ Deuteronomy 28:39), often repeated and ever found true. Wickedness makes joy its end, yet never finds it, seeking it where it is not, out of God.

~~3014~~ **Zephaniah 1:14.** *The great Day of the Lord is near* The prophet again expands the words of Joel, accumulating words expressive of the

terrors of that Day, showing that though “the great and very terrible Day of the Lord” (⁽²⁰¹⁾Joel 2:31), (Joel had said) “a day of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and of thick darkness” (⁽²⁰⁰⁾Joel 2:2), “which was then coming and nigh at hand” (⁽²⁰⁰⁾Joel 2:1), had come and was gone, it was only a forerunner of others; none of them final; but each, because it “was” a judgment and an instance of the justice of God, an earnest and forerunner of other judgments to the end. Again, “a great Day of the Lord was near.” This Day had itself, so to speak, many hours and divisions of the day. But each hour tolleth the same knell of approaching doom. Each calamity in the miserable reigns of the sons of Josiah was one stroke in the passing-bell, until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans, for the time closed it. The judgment was complete. The completeness of that excision made it the more an image of every other like day until the final destruction of all which, although around or near to Christ, shall in the Great Day be found not to be His, but to have rejected Him. Jerome: “Truly was vengeance required, ‘from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, whom they slew between the temple and the altar’ (⁽⁴²⁵⁾Matthew 23:35), and at last when they said of the Son of God, ‘His blood be upon us and upon our children’” (⁽⁴²⁵⁾Matthew 27:25), they experienced a bitter day, because they had provoked the Lord to bitterness; a Day, appointed by the Lord, in which not the weak only but the mighty shall be bowed down, and wrath shall come upon them to the end. For often before they endured the wrath of the Lord, but that wrath was not to the uttermost. What need now to describe how great calamities they endured in both captivities, and how they who rejected the light of the Lord, walked in darkness and thick darkness, and they who would not hear the trumpet of the solemn feast-days, heard the shout of the enemy. But of the “fenced cities” and “lofty corner-towers” of Judaea, which are until now destroyed even to the ground, the eyes, I deem, can judge better than the ears. We especially, now living in that province, can see, can prove what is written. We scarcely discern slight traces of ruins of what once were great cities. At Shiloh, where was the tabernacle and ark of the testament of the Lord, scarcely the foundations of the altar are shown. Rama and Bethoron and the other noble cities built by Solomon, are shown to be little villages. Let us read Josepius and the prophecy of Zephaniah; we shall see his history before our eyes. And this must be said not only of the captivity, but even to the present day. The treacherous farmers, having slain the servants, and, at last, the Son of God, are prevented from entering Jerusalem, except to wail, and they purchase at a price leave to weep the

ruin of their city, so that they who once bought the Blood of Christ, buy their tears; not even their tears are costless. You may see on the day that Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans, a people in mourning come, decrepit old women and old men, in aged and ragged wretchedness, showing in their bodies and in their guise the wrath of the Lord. The hapless crowd is gathered, and amid the gleaming of the Cross of Christ, and the radiant glory of His Resurrection, the standard also of the Cross shining from Mount Olivet, you may see the people, piteous but unpitied, bewail the ruins of their temple, tears still on their cheeks, their arms livid and their hair disheveled, and the soldier asketh a guerdon, that they may be allowed to weep longer. And doth any, when he seeth this, doubt of the “day of trouble and distress, the day of darkness and gloominess, the day of clouds and thick darkness, the day of the trumpet and alarm?” For they have also trumpets in their sorrow, and, according to the prophecy, the voice of “the solemn feast-day is turned into mourning.” They wail over the ashes of the sanctuary and the altar destroyed, and over cities once fenced, and over the high towers of the temple, from which they once cast headlong James the brother of the Lord.”

But referring the Day of the Lord to the end of the world or the close of the life of each, it too is near; near, the prophet adds to impress the more its nearness, for it is at hand to each; and when eternity shall come, all time shall seem like a moment, “A thousand years, when past, are like a watch in the night” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 90:4); one fourth part of one night.

And hasteth greatly For time whirls on more rapidly to each, year by year, and when God’s judgments draw near, the tokens of them thicken, and troubles sweep one over the other, events jostle against each other. The voice of the day of the Lord. That Day, when it cometh, shall leave no one in doubt what it meaneth; it shall give no uncertain sound, but shall, trumpet-tongued, proclaim the holiness and justice of Almighty God; its voice shall be the Voice of Christ, which “all that are in the graves shall hear and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation” (~~John~~ John 5:28,29).

“The mighty men shall cry there bitterly, for “bitter is the remembrance of death to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things” (Ecclesiasticus 41:1); and, “There is no mighty man that hath power over the spirit to

retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it" (²⁰⁸⁸Ecclesiastes 8:8). Rather, wrath shall come upon "the kings" of the earth, "and the great men and the rich men and the mighty men, and" they shall will to "hide" themselves "from the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great Day of His wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?" (⁶⁰⁸⁵Revelation 6:15-17).

The mighty men shall cry there bitterly The prophet has spoken of time, "the day of the Lord." He points out the more vividly the unseen sight and place, "there;" so David says, "There they feared a fear" (³⁹⁴⁸Psalms 14:5). He sees the place; he hears the bitter cry. So near is it in fact; so close the connection of cause and effect, of sin and punishment. There shall be a great and bitter cry, when there shall be no place for repentance. It shall be a mighty cry, but mighty in the bitterness of its distress. "Mighty men shall be mightily tormented" (Wisdom 6:6), that is, those who have been mighty against God, weak against Satan, and shall have used their might in his service.

³⁰¹⁵**Zephaniah 1:15.** *A day of wrath* In which all the wrath of Almighty God, which evil angels and evil men have treasured to them for that day, shall be poured out: "the" day of wrath, because then they shall be brought face to face before the presence of God, but thenceforth they shall be cast out of it forever.

A day of trouble and distress Both words express, how anguish shall narrow and hem them in; so that there shall be no escape; above them, God displeased; below, the flames of Hell; around, devils to drag them away, and Angels casting them forth "in bundles to burn them;" without, "the books" which shall be opened;" and within, conscience leaving them no escape.

A day of wasteness and desolation In which all things shall return to their primeval void, before "the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters," His presence being altogether withdrawn.

A day of darkness and gloominess For sun and moon shall lose their brightness, and no brightness from the Lamb shall shine upon the wicked, but they shall be driven into "outer darkness."

A day of clouds and thick darkness Hiding from them the Face of the Sun of Righteousness, and covering Him, so that their “prayers should not pass through” (<2844>Lamentations 3:44).

<3016>**Zephaniah 1:16.** *A day of the trumpet and alarm* (“Alarm” seems to be used in the sense of “sounding alarm” alarum) that is, of the loud blast of the trumpet, which sounds alarm and causes it. The word is especially the shrill loud noise of the trumpet (for sacred purposes in Israel itself, as ruling all the movements of the tabernacle and accompanying their feasts); then also of the “battle cry.” They had not listened to the voice of the trumpet, as it called them to holy service; now they shall hear “the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God” (<5046>1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Against the high towers Literally, “corners”,^{f354} and so “corner-towers.” This peculiarity describes Jerusalem, whose walls (Tacitus, History v. 11. Josephus, B. J. v. 5. 3) “were made artificially standing in a line curved inwards, so that the flanks of assailants might be exposed.” By this same name (<0702>Judges 20:2; <0948>1 Samuel 14:38; <2393>Isaiah 19:13; <3804>Zechariah 10:4) are called the mighty men and chiefs of the people, who, humanly speaking, hold it together and support it; on these chiefs in rebellion against God, whether devils or evil men, shall punishment greatly fall.

<3017>**Zephaniah 1:17.** *I will bring distress upon men* I will hem them in, in anguish on all sides. God Himself shall meet them with His terrors, wherever they turn. “I will hem them in, that they may find it so” (<2408>Jeremiah 10:18. Moses had said this of His instruments, “And He shall hem thee in, in all thy gates.” <6382>Deuteronomy 28:52).

That they shall walk like blind men Utterly bereft of counsel, seeing no more than the blind which way to turn, grasping blindly and frantically at anything, and going on headlong to their own destruction. So God forewarned them in the law; “Thou shalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkness” (<2402>Jeremiah 10:29); and Job, of the wicked generally, “They meet with the darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night” (<8614>Job 5:14); and, “They grope in the dark without light, and He maketh them to stagger like a drunken man” (<1825>Job 12:25); and Isaiah foretelling of those times, “We grope for the wall, as the blind; and we grope, as if we had no eyes; we stumble in the noon-day as in the night. Because they have sinned against the Lord” (<2390>Isaiah 59:10), and so He hath turned their wisdom into foolishness, and since they have

despised Him, He hath made them objects of contempt. “Their blood shall be poured out like dust” (^{<3923>}1 Samuel 2:30), as abundant and as valueless; utterly disregarded by Him, as Asaph complains, “their blood have they shed like water” (^{<3973>}Psalm 79:3); contemptible and disgusting as what is vilest; “their flesh as the dung,” refuse, decayed, putrefied, offensive, enriching by its decay the land, which had been the scene of their luxuries and oppressions. Yet, the most offensive disgusting physical corruption is but a faint image of the defilement of sin. This punishment, in which the carrion remains should be entombed only in the bowels of vultures and dogs, was especially threatened to Jehoiakim; “He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, dragged and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (^{<3929>}Jeremiah 22:19).

^{<3918>}**Zephaniah 1:18.** *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath* Gain unjustly gotten was the cause of their destruction. For, as Ezekiel closes the like description; “They shall cast their silver into the streets, and their gold shall be removed; their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; they shall not satisfy their souls nor fill their bowels: “because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity” (^{<3979>}Ezekiel 7:19). Much less shall any possession, outward or inward, be of avail in the Great Day; since in death the rich man’s “pomp shall not follow him” (^{<3947>}Psalm 49:17), and every gift which he has misused, whether of mind or spirit, even the knowledge of God without doing His will, shall but increase damnation. “Sinners will then have nothing but their sins.”

Here the prophet uses images belonging more to the immediate destruction; at the close the words again widen, and belong, in their fullest literal sense, to the Day of Judgment. “The whole land,” rather, as at the beginning, “the whole earth shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land:” rather, “He shall make an utter, yea altogether (“nothing but”) a terrific destruction of all the dwellers of the earth.” What Nahum had foretold of Nineveh (See above on ^{<3908>}Nahum 1:8), “He shall make the place thereof an utter consumption,” that Zephaniah foretells of all the inhabitants of the world. For what is this, “the whole earth shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy,” but what Peter says, “the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up?” (^{<3963>}2 Peter 3:13). And what is that he says, “He shall make all the dwellers of the earth an utter, yea altogether a hasty destruction,” but a general judgment of all, who belong to the world,

whose home, citizenship, whose whole mind is in the world, not as true Christians, who are strangers and pilgrims here, and their “citizenship is in heaven?” (^{<8113>}Hebrews 11:13; ^{<3083>}Philippians 3:20). These God shall make an utter, terrific, speedy destruction, a living death, so that they shall at once both be and not be; be, as continued in being; not be, as having no life of God, but only a continued death in misery. And this shall be through the jealousy of Almighty God, that divine quality in Him, whereby He loves and wills to be loved, and endures not those who give to others the love for which He gave so much and which is so wholly due to Himself Alone. Augustine, Conf. i. 5. p. 3, Oxford Translation:

“Thou demandest my love, and if I give it not, art wroth with me, and threatenest me with grievous woes. Is it then a slight woe to love Thee not?”

What will be that anger, which is Infinite Love, but which becomes, through man’s sin, Hate?

NOTES ON ZEPHANIAH 2

Having set forth the terrors of the Judgment Day, the prophet adds an earnest call to repentance; and then declares how judgments, forerunners of that Day, shall fall, one by one, on those nations around, who know not God, and shall rest upon Nineveh, the great beautiful ancient city of the world. Jerome: “See the mercy of God. It had been enough to have set before the wise the vehemence of the coming evil. But because He willeth not to punish, but to alarm only, Himself calleth to repentance, that He may not do what He threatened.” Cyril: “Having set forth clearly the savageness of the war and the greatness of the suffering to come, he suitably turns his discourse to the duty of calling to repentance, when it was easy to persuade them, being terrified. For sometimes when the mind has been numbed, and exceedingly bent to evil, we do not readily admit even the will to repent, but fear often drives us to it, even against our will. He calls us then to friendship with Himself. For as they revolted, became aliens, serving idols and giving up their mind to their passions, so they would, as it were, retrace their steps, and lay hold of the friendship of God, choosing to serve Him, nay and Him Alone, and obey His commandments. Wherefore, while we have time, while the Lord, in His forbearance as God, gives way, let us enact repentance, supplicate, say weeping, “remember not the sins and offences of my youth” (~~<B27>~~ Psalm 25:7); let us unite ourselves with Him by sanctification and sobriety. So shall we be sheltered in the day of wrath, and wash away the stain of our falls, before the Day of the Lord come upon us. For the Judge will come, He will come from heaven at the due season, and will reward each according to his work.”

~~<B11>~~ **Zephaniah 2:1.** *Gather yourselves together, yea gather together,*^{f355} rather, “Sift yourselves, yea sift”.^{f356} The exact image is from gathering stubble or dry sticks, which are picked up one by one, with search and care. So must men deal with the dry and withered leaves of a past evil life. The English rendering however, comes to the same meaning. We use, “collect oneself” for bringing oneself, all one’s thoughts, together, and so, having full possession of oneself. Or “gathering ourselves” might stand in contrast with being “abroad,” as it were, out of ourselves amid the manifoldness of things seen. Jerome: “Thou who, taken up with the business of the world, hurriest to and fro amid divers things, return to the Church of the saints, and join thyself to their life and assembly, whom thou

seest to please God, and bring together the dislocated members of thy soul, which now are not knit together, into one frame of wisdom, and cleave to its embrace." "Gather yourselves" into one, wherein ye have been scattered; to the One God, from whom they had wandered, seeking pleasure from His many creatures; to His one fold and Church, from which they had severed themselves outwardly by joining the worship of Baal, inwardly, by serving him and his abominable rites; joining and joined to the assembly of the faithful, by oneness of faith and life.

In order to repent, a man must know himself thoroughly; and this can only be done by taking act by act, word by word, thought by thought, as far as he can, not in a confused heap or mass, as they lie in any man's conscience, but one by one, each picked up apart, and examined, and added to the sear unfruitful heap, plucking them as it were, and gathering them out of himself, that so they may, by the Spirit of burning, the fire of God's Spirit kindling repentance, be burned up, and not the sinner himself be fuel for fire with them. The word too is intensive, "Gather together all which is in you, thoroughly, piece by piece" (for the sinner's whole self becomes chaff, dry and empty). To use another image, "Sift yourselves thoroughly, so that nothing escape, as far as your diligence can reach, and then — "And gather on," that is, "glean on;" examine yourselves, "not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers before God," but repeatedly, gleaning again and again, to see if by any means anything have escaped: continuing on the search and ceasing not. The first earnest search into the soul must be the beginning, not the end. Our search must be continued, until there be no more to be discovered, that is, when sin is no more, and we see ourselves in the full light of the presence of our Judge. For a first search, however diligent, never thoroughly reaches the whole deep disease of the whole man; the most grievous sins hide other grievous sins, though lighter. Some sins flash on the conscience, at one time, some at another; so that few, even upon a diligent search, come at once to the knowledge of all their heaviest sins. When the mist is less thick, we see more clearly what was before one dark dull mass of imperfection and misery. (Bern. de Cons. c. 5): "Spiritual sins are also with difficulty sifted, (as they are,) by one who is carnal. Whence it happens, that things in themselves heavier he perceives less or very little, and conscience is not grieved so much by the memory of pride or envy, as of impurities and crimes." So having said, "Sift yourselves through and through," he says, "sift on." A diligent sifting and search into himself must be the beginning of all true repentance and pardon. (Id. Serm.

58. in Song of Solomon fin.): “What remains, but that we give ourselves wholly to this work, so holy, and needful? “Let us search and try our ways and our doings”,^{f357} and let each think that he has made progress, not if he find not what to blame, but if he blame what he finds. Thou hast not sifted thyself in vain, if thou hast discovered that thou needest a fresh sitting; and so often has thy search not failed thee, as thou judgest that it must be renewed. But if thou ever dost this, when there is need, thou dost it ever. But ever remember that thou needest help from above and the mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord Who is over all, God blessed forever.” The whole course of self-examination then lies in two words of divine Scripture. And withal he warns them, instead of gathering together riches which shall “not be able to deliver them in the day of trouble,” to gather themselves into themselves, and so “judge” themselves “thoroughly (**διακρινατε** ^{<1252>}, which answers to the intensive form here, “judge yourselves through and through”), that they be not judged of the Lord” (^{<413>}1 Corinthians 11:31,32).

O nation not desired,^{f358} that is, having nothing in itself to be desired or loved, but rather, for its sin, hateful to God. God yearneth with pity and compassion over His creatures; He “hath a desire to the work of His Hands” (^{<415>}Job 14:15. The word is the same). Here Israel is spoken to, as what he had made himself, hateful to God by his sins, although still an object of His tender care, in what yet remained to him of nature or grace which was from Himself.

^{<112>}**Zephaniah 2:2.** *Before the decree bring forth* God’s word is full (as it were) of the event which it foretellet; it contains its own fulfillment in itself, and “travaileth” until it come to pass, giving signs of its coming, yet delaying until the full time. Time is said to bring forth what is wrought in it. “Thou knowest not, what a day shall bring forth.”

Before the day pass as the chaff Or, parenthetically, “like chaff the day passeth by.” God’s counsels lie wrapt up, as it were, in the womb of time, wherein He hides them, until the moment which He has appointed, and they break forth suddenly to those who look not for them. The mean season is given for repentance, that is, the day of grace, the span of repentance still allowed, which is continually whirling more swiftly by; and woe, if it be fruitless as chaff! Those who profit not by it shall also be as chaff, carried away pitilessly by the whirlwind to destruction. Time, on which eternity hangs, is a slight, uncertain thing, as little to be counted

upon, as the light dry particles which are the sport of the wind, driven uncertainly here and there. But when it is “passed,” then “cometh,” not “to” them, but “upon” them, from heaven, overwhelming them, “abiding upon” (^{<RB>}John 3:36) them, not to pass away, “the heat of the anger of Almighty God.” This warning he twice repeats, to impress the certainty and speed of its coming (^{<RB>}Genesis 41:32). It is the warning of our Lord, “Take heed, lest that day come upon you unawares” (^{<RB>}Luke 16:34).

^{<RB>}**Zephaniah 2:3.** *Seek ye the Lord* He had exhorted sinners to penitence; he now calls the righteous to persevere and increase more and more. He bids them “seek diligently” (The Hebrew form is intensive), and that with a three-fold call, to seek Him from whom they received daily the three-fold blessing (^{<RB>}Numbers 6:23-26), Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as he had just before threatened God’s impending judgment with the same use of the mysterious number, three. They, whom he calls, were already, by the grace of God, “meek,” and “had wrought His judgment.” Rup.: “Submitting themselves to the word of God, they had done and were doing the judgment of God, ‘judging themselves that they be not judged;’ the beginning of which judgment is, as sinners and guilty of death, to give themselves to the Cross of the Lord, that is, to be ‘baptized’ in ‘His Death and be buried with Him by Baptism into death;’ but the perfection of that judgment or righteousness is, to ‘walk in newness of life, as He rose from the dead through the glory of the Father’ (^{<RB>}Romans 6:3,4).”

Dionysius: “Since the meek already have God through grace as the Possessor and Dweller in their heart, how shall they seek Him but that they may have Him more fully and more perfectly, knowing Him more clearly, loving Him more ardently, cleaving to Him more inseparably, that so they may be heard by Him, not for themselves only, but for others?” It is then the same Voice as at the close of the Revelation, “the righteous, let him be still more righteous; the holy, let him be still more holy” (^{<RB>}Revelation 22:11). They are the “meek,” who are exhorted “diligently” to “seek meekness,” and they who had “wrought His judgment,” who are “diligently” to “seek Righteousness.” And since our Lord saith, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart” (^{<RB>}Matthew 11:29), He bids (Jerome) “those who imitated His meekness and did His judgment, to seek the Lord in their meekness.” Meekness and Righteousness may be His Attributes, Who is All-gentleness and All-Righteousness, the Fountain of all, wheresoever it is, in gentleness receiving penitents, and, as “the Righteous Judge, giving the crown of righteousness” to those who “love

Him and keep His commandments,” yea He joineth righteousness with meekness, since without His mercy no man living could be justified in His Sight. Cyril: “God is sought by us, when, of our choice, laying aside all listlessness, we thirst after doing what pleases Him; and we shall do judgment too, when we fulfill His divine law, working out what is good unshrinkingly; and we shall gain the prize of righteousness, when crowned with glory for well-doing and running the well-reported anti blameless way of true piety to God and of love to the brethren, for ‘love is the fulfilling of the law’ (^{<6330>}Romans 13:10).”

It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger Rup.: “Shall these too then scarcely be ‘hid in the day of the Lord’s anger?’ Doth not the Apostle Peter say the very same? ‘If it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?’ (^{<1047>}1 Peter 4:17,18). So then, although any be ‘meek,’ although he ‘have wrought the judgment’ of the Lord, let him ever suspect himself, nor think that he has ‘already attained,’ since neither can any righteous be saved, if he be judged ‘without mercy.’” Dionysius: “He saith, if ‘may’ be; not that there is any doubt that the meek and they who perseveringly seek God, shall then be saved, but, to convey how difficult it is to be saved, and how fearful and rigorous is the judgment of God.” To be hid is to be sheltered from wrath under the protection of God; as David says, “In the time of trouble He shall hide me” (^{<3275>}Psalms 27:5); and, “Thou shalt hide them (that trust in Thee) in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (^{<3812>}Psalms 31:20). And in Isaiah, “A Man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest” (^{<2332>}Isaiah 32:2); and, “There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain” (^{<2386>}Isaiah 5:6).

^{<3104>}**Zephaniah 2:4.** *For* As a ground for repentance and perseverance, he goes through Pagan nations, upon whom God’s wrath should come. Jerome: “As Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, after visions concerning Judah, turn to other nations round about, and according to the character of each, announce what shall come upon them, and dwell at length upon it, so doth this prophet, though more briefly” And thus under five nations, who lay west, east, south and north, he includes all mankind on all sides, and, again, according to their respective characters toward Israel, as they are alien from, or hostile to the Church; the Philistines (^{<3104>}Zephaniah 2:4-7), as a

near, malicious, infesting enemy; Moab and Ammon (^{211B}Isaiah 2:8-10), people akin to her (as heretics) yet ever rejoicing at her troubles and sufferings; Etheopians (^{215D}Isaiah 5:12), distant nations at peace with her, and which are, for the most part, spoken of as to be brought unto her; Assyria (Isaiah 13-15), as the great oppressive power of the world, and so upon it the full desolation rests. In the first fulfillment, because Moab and Ammon aiding Nebuchadnezzar, (and all, in various ways wronging God's people (^{236F}Isaiah 16:4; ^{310D}Amos 1:13-15; 2:1-3; ^{348Z}Jeremiah 48:27-30,42; 49:1; ^{331B}Ezekiel 20:3,6,8)), trampled on His sanctuary, overthrew His temple and blasphemed the Lord, the prophecy is turned against them. So then, before the captivity came, while Josiah was yet king, and Jerusalem and the temple were, as yet, not overthrown, the prophecy is directed against those who mocked at them. "Gaza shall be forsaken." Out of the five cities of the Philistines, the prophet pronounces woe upon the same four as Amos (Amos 1:6-8) before, Jeremiah (^{251D}Jeremiah 25:20) soon after, and Zechariah (^{385B}Zechariah 9:5,6) later. Gath, then, the fifth had probably remained with Judah since Uzziah (^{140F}2 Chronicles 26:6) and Hezekiah (^{128B}2 Kings 18:8). In the sentence of the rest, regard is had (as is so frequent in the Old Testament) to the names of the places themselves, that, henceforth, the name of the place might suggest the thought of the doom pronounced upon it. The names expressed boastfulness, and so, in the divine judgment, carried their own sentence with them, and this sentence is pronounced by a slight change in the word. Thus 'Azzah' (Gaza,) 'strong' shall be 'Azoobah, desolated;' "Ekron, deep-rooting",^{f359} shall "Teaker, be uprooted;" the "Cherethites" (cutters off) shall become (Cheroth) "diggings;" "Chebel, the band" of the sea coast, shall be in another sense "Chebel," an "inheritance" (^{315B}Zephaniah 2:5,7), divided by line to the remnant of Judah; and "Ashdod" (the waster (The root has throughout, the meaning of "wasting," not of "strength")) shall be taken in their might, not by craft, nor in the way of robbers, but "driven forth" violently and openly in the "noon-day."

For Gaza shall be forsaken Some vicissitudes of these towns have been noted already (See the notes at Amos 1:6-8). The fulfillment of the prophecy is not tied down to time; the one marked contrast is, that the old pagan enemies of Judah should be destroyed, the house of Judah should be restored, and should re-enter upon the possession of the land, promised to them of old. The Philistine towns had, it seems, nothing to fear from Babylon or Persia, to whom they remained faithful subjects. The

Ashdodites (who probably, as the most important, stand for the whole^{f360}) combined with Sanballat, “the Ammonites and the Arabians” (<K8HJ> Nehemiah 4:7), to hinder the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Even an army was gathered, headed by Samaria (Nehemiah 2). They gave themselves out as loyal, Jerusalem as rebellious (<K8D9> Nehemiah 2:19; 6:6). The old sin remaining, Zechariah renewed the sentence by Zephaniah against the four cities (Zechariah 9); a prophecy, which an unbeliever also has recognized as picturing the march of Alexander (Eichhorn, Einl. iv. 605. See “Daniel the Prophet,” p. 280, following). (Polyb. Reliq. xvi. 40): “All the other cities of Palestine having submitted,” Gaza alone resisted the conqueror for two or five months. It had come into the hands of the Persians in the expedition of Cambyses against Egypt (Mela i. 11). The Gazaeans having all perished fighting at their posts, Alexander sold the women and children, and re-populated the city from the neighborhood (Arrian ii. 27). Palestine lay between the two rival successors of Alexander, the Ptolemies and Seleucidae, and felt their wars (Polyb. v. 68). Gaza fell through mischance into the hands of Ptolemy (Diod. Sic. xix. 84), 11 years after the death of Alexander (Hecat. in Josephus, c. Ap. i. 22 Opp. ii. 455), and soon after, was destroyed by Antiochus (Polyb. Reliq. xvi. 40) (198 B.C.), “preserving its faith to Ptolemy” as before to the Persians, in a way admired by a pagan historian. In the Maccabee wars, Judas Maccabaeus chiefly destroyed the idols of Ashdod, but also “spoiled their cities” (1 Macc. 5:68); Jonathan set it on fire, with its idol-temple, which was a sort of citadel to it (1 Macc. 10:84); Ascalon submitted to him (1 Macc. 10:86); Ekron with its borders were given to him by Alexander Balas (1 Macc. 10:89); he burned the suburbs of Gaza (1 Macc. 11:61); Simon took it, expelled its inhabitants, filled it with believing Jews and fortified it more strongly than before (1 Macc. 13:43-48); but, after a year’s siege, it was betrayed to Alexander Jannaeus, who killed its senate of 500 and razed the city to the ground (Josephus, Ant. xiii. 13. 3). Gabinius restored it and Ashdod (Josephus, Ant. xiv. 5. 3). After Herod’s death, Ashdod was given to Salome (Josephus, Ant. xvii. 8. 1); Gaza, as being a Greek city (B. J. ii. 6. 3), was detached from the realm of Archelaus and annexed to Syria. It was destroyed by the Jews in their revolt when Florus was “procurator,” 55 A.D (<KATECKAΠTON <2679>, Josephus, B. J. ii. 18. 1). Ascalon and Gaza must still have been strong, and were probably a distinct population in the early times of Antipater, father of Herod, when Alexander and Alexandra set him over all Idumaea, since “he is said” then (Ant. xiv. 1. 3) “to have

made friendship with the Arabs, Gazites and Ascalonites, likeminded with himself, and to have attached them by many and large presents.”

Yet though the inhabitants were changed, the hereditary hatred remained. Philo in his Embassy to Caius, 40 A.D., used the strong language (Philo, Leg. ad Caium T. ii. p. 576 Mang. The words are **ασυμβατος τις και ακαταλλακτος δυσμενεια**),

“The Ascalonites have an implacable and irreconcilable enmity to the Jews, their neighbors, who inhabit the holy land.”

This continued toward Christians. Some horrible atrocities, of almost inconceivable savagery, by these of Gaza and Ascalon 361 A.D., are related by Theodoret (Theodotion, H. E. iii. 7) and Sozomen (Soz. H. E. v. 10). (Orat. 4. in Julian. c. 36): “Who is ignorant of the madness of the Gazaeans?” asks Gregory of Nazianzus, of the times of Julian. This was previous to the conversion of the great Gazite temple of Marna into a Christian Church by Eudoxia (“This too we see to be fulfilled in our times. The temple of Serapis at Alexandria, and of Marna at Gaza, rose to be temples of the Lord.” Jerome on Isaiah 17). On occasion of Constantine’s exemption of the Maiumas Gazae from their control, it is alleged, that they were (**ες αγαν** ^{<25>} **ελληνιζουσιν** ^{<1675>} . Soz. v. 3) “extreme heathen.” In the time of the Crusades the Ascalonites are described by Christians as their^{f361} “most savage enemies.”

It may be, that a likeness of sin may have continued on a likeness of punishment. But the primary prediction was against the people, not against the walls. The sentence, “Gaza shall be forsaken,” would have been fulfilled by the removal or captivity of its inhabitants, even if they had not been replaced by others. A prediction against any ancient British town would have been fulfilled, if the Britons in it had been replaced or exterminated by Danes, and these by Saxons, and these subdued by the Normans, though their displacers became wealthy and powerful in their place. Even on the same site it would not be the same Gaza, when the Philistine Gaza became Edomite, and the Edomite Greek, and the Greek Arabian (See the note at Amos 1:6, vol. i. p. 244). Ashdod (as well as Gaza) is spoken of as a city of the Greeks (Psalm Epiphanius de vitis Proph. p. 246); New Gaza is spoken of as a mixture of Turks, Arabians, Fellahs, Bedouins out of Egypt, Syria, Petraea (Ritter xvi. 49). Felix Faber says, “there is a wonderful com-mixture of divers nations in it, Ethiopians, Arabs, Egyptians, Syrians, Indians and eastern Christians; no Latins (Fabri

Evagatorium T. ii. p. 379).” Its Jewish inhabitants fled from it in the time of Napoleon: now, with few exceptions it is inhabited by Arabs (Schwartz, d. Heil. land p. 91. 1853).

But these, Ghuzzeh, Eskalon, Akir, Sedud, are at most successors of the Philistine cities, of which there is no trace above the surface of the earth. It is common to speak of “remnants of antiquity,” as being or not being to be found in any of them; but this means, that, where these exist, there are remains of a Greek or Roman, not of a Philistine city.

Of the four cities, “Akkaron,” Ekron, (“the firm-rooting”) has not left a vestige. It is mentioned by name only, after the times of the Bible, by some who passed by it (“Passing through Azotus, between which and Jamnia, which is situate on the sea, (that is, the maritime Jamnia) we left Accaron on one side.” Fulcher. Carnot. 1100 A.D. Gesta Peregr. Franc. c. 23 p. 464 quoted Raumer’s verb).

There was “a large village of Jews” so called in the time of Eusebius and Jerome (de locis Hebr. T. iii. p. 146. Vall.), “between Azotus and Jamnia.” Now a village of (Porter Handbook, p. 275) “about 50 mud houses without a single remnant of antiquity except 2 large finely built wells” bears the name of Akir. Jerome adds, “Some think that Accaron is the tower of Strato, afterward called Caesarea.” This was perhaps derived from misunderstanding his Jewish instructor.^{f362} But it shows how entirely all knowledge of Ekron was then lost.

Ashdod Or Azotus which, at the time when Zephaniah prophesied, held out a twenty-nine years’ siege against Psammetichus, is replaced by (Porter, Handbook, pp. 272,273) “a moderate sized village of mud houses, situated on the eastern declivity of a little flattish hill,” “entirely modern, not containing a vestige of antiquity.” “A beautiful sculptured sarcophagus with some fragments of small marble shafts,” “near the Khan on the southwest.” belong of course to later times. “The whole south side of the hill appears also, as if it had been once covered with buildings, the stones of which are now thrown together in the rude fences.” Its Bishops are mentioned from the Council of Nice to 536 A.D. (Reland p. 609), and so probably continued until the Muslim devastation. It is not mentioned in the Talmud (It does not appear in Neubauer, Geographie du Talmud). Benjamin of Tudela calls it Palmis, and says, “it is desolate, and there are no Jews in it (“Palmis, which is Ashdod of the Philistines,” ed. Asher).”

(Asher note Ibid. T. ii. p. 99): “Neither Ibn Haukal (Yacut), Edrisi, Abulfeda, nor William of Tyre mention it.”

Ascalon and Gaza had each a port, Maiuma Gazae, Maiuma Ascalon; literally, “a place on the sea” (an Egyptian name (“The name Maiuma seems to belong to the Egyptian language, and to offer the two words MAIOM “place by the sea.” Quatremere, les sultans Mamlouks de Makrizi T. i. 2 App. p. 229)) belonging to Ascalon or Gaza. The name involves that Ascalon and Gaza themselves, the old Philistine towns, were not on the sea. They were, like Athens, built inland, perhaps (as has been conjectured) from fear of the raids of pirates, or of inroads from those who (like the Philistines themselves probably, or some tribe of them) might come from the sea. The port probably of both was built in much later times; the Egyptian name implies that they were built by Egyptians, after the time when its kings Necos and Apries, (Pharaoh-Necho and Pharaoh-Hophra, who took Gaza (²⁴⁷⁰Jeremiah 47:1)) made Egypt a naval power (See Herodotus ii. 159, 161, and Rawlinson on ii. 182. Herodotus T. ii. p. 277). This became a characteristic of these Philistine cities. They themselves lay more or less inland, and had a city connected with them of the same name, on the shore. Thus there was an (Αζωτος ^{<108>} παραλος . Excerpta in Graeca notitia patriarch. in Reland p. 215. Schwarz (d. heil. land p. 91) places Ashdod at an hour from the “Mediterranean”), “Azotus by the sea,” and an “Azotus Ispinus.” There were (Pliny, N.H. v. 12) “two Iamniae, one inland.” But Ashdod lay further from the sea than Gaza; Yamnia, (the Yabneel of Joshua (⁴⁶⁵¹Joshua 15:11), in Uzziah’s time, Yabneh (⁴²¹⁶2 Chronicles 26:6)) further than Ashdod. The port of Yamnia was burned by Judas (2 Macc. 12:9).

The “name,” Maiumas, does not appear until Christian times, though “the port of Gaza” is mentioned by Strabo (Strabo xvi. 2, 30. p. 759): to it, Alexander brought from Tyre the machines, with which he took Gaza itself (“The engines, with which he took Tyre, being sent for by him, arrive from the sea.” Arr. ii. 27).

That port then must have been at some distance from Gaza. Each port became a town, large enough to have, in Christian times, a Bishop of its own. The Epistle of John of Jerusalem, inserted in the Acts of the Council of Constantinople, 536 A.D., written in the name of Palestine i., ii., and iii., is signed by a Bishop of Maiumen of Ascalon, as well as by a Bishop of Ascalon, as it is by a Bishop of Maiumas of Gaza as well as by a Bishop of

Gaza. (Conc. T. v. 1164. Col.). Yabne, or Yamnia, was on a small eminence (Irby and Mangles p. 57), 6 1/2 hours from the sea (Michaud et Poujoulat Corresp. d'Orient v. p. 373, 374). The Maiumas Gazae became the more known. To it, as being Christian, Constantine gave the right of citizenship, and called it Constantia from his son, making it a city independent of Gaza. Julian the Apostate gave to Gaza (which, though it had Bishops and Martyrs, had a pagan temple at the beginning of the 5th century) its former jurisdiction over it, and though about 20 furlongs off, it was called "the maritime portion of Gaza" (Soz. v. 3). It had thenceforth the same municipal officers; but, "as regards the Church alone," Sozomen adds, "they still appear to be two cities; each has its own Bishop and clergy, and festivals and martyrs, and commemorations of those who had been their Bishops, and 'boundaries of the fields around,' whereby the altars which belong to each Episcopate are parted." The provincial Synod decided against the desire of a Bishop of Gaza, in Sozomen's time, who wished to bring the Clergy of the Maiumites under himself ruling that "although deprived of their civil privileges by a pagan king, they should not be deprived of those of the Church."

In 400 A.D., then, the two cities were distinct, not joined or running into one another.

Jerome mentions it as (Vita S. Hilarion. n. 3. Opp. ii. 15. Vall.) "Maiumas, the emporium of Gaza, 7 miles from the desert on the way to Egypt by the sea;" Sozomen speaks of (Soz. vii. 21) "Gaza by the sea, which they also call Maiumas;" Evagrius (Ev. ii. 5), "that which they also call Maiumas, which is over against the city Gaza" (Ev. ii. 8), "a little city." Mark the deacon, 421 A.D., says (Marcus Diac. 421 A.D., in vita Porphyrii, c. 8. ap. Bolland. Feb. 26), "We sailed to the maritime portion of Gaza, which they call Maiumas," and Antoninus Martyr, about the close of the 6th century (Itin. B. Antonini, pp. 24, 25), "we came from Ascalon to Mazomates, and came thence, after a mile, to Gaza — that magnificent and lovely city." This perhaps explains how an anonymous Geographer, enumerating the places from Egypt to Tyre, says so distinctly (Hudson Geograph. Minores T. iv. p. 39), "after Rinocorura lies the new Gaza, being itself also a city; then the desert Gaza," (writing, we must suppose, after some of the destructions of Gaza); and Jerome could say equally positively (T. iii. p. 218); "The site of the ancient city scarce yields the traces of foundations; but the city now seen was built in another place in lieu of that which fell."

Keith, who in 1844 explored the spot, found widespread traces of some extinct city.

(Keith on prophecy, from personal examination, pp. 378, 379):

“At seven furlongs from the sea the manifold but minute remains of an ancient city are yet in many places to be found — Innumerable fragments of broken pottery, pieces of glass, (some beautifully stained) and of polished marble, lie thickly spread in every level and hollow, at a considerable elevation and various distances, on a space of several square miles. In fifty different places they profusely lie, in a level space far firmer than the surrounding sands,”

“from small patches to more open spaces of twelve or twenty thousand square yards.” “The oblong sand-hill, greatly varied in its elevation and of an undulated surface, throughout which they recur, extends to the west and west-southwest. from the sea nearly to the environs of the modern Gaza.” “In attempts to cultivate the sand (in 1832) hewn stones were found, near the old port. Remains of an old wall reached to the sea. — Ten large fragments of wall were embedded in the sand. About 2 miles off are fragments of another wall. Four intermediate fountains still exist, nearly entire in a line along the coast, doubtless pertaining to the ancient port of Gaza. For a short distance inland, the debris is less frequent, as if marking the space between it and the ancient city, but it again becomes plentiful in every hollow. About half a mile from the sea we saw three pedestals of beautiful marble. Holes are still to be seen from which hewn stones had been taken.”

On the other hand, since the old Ashkelon had, like Gaza, Jamnia, Ashdod, a sea-port town, belonging to it but distinct from itself, (the city itself lying distinct and inland), and since there is no space for two towns distinct from one another, within the circuit of the Ashkelon of the crusades, which is limited by the nature of the ground, there seems to be no choice but that the city of the crusades, and the present skeleton, should have been the Maiumas Ascalon, the sea-port. The change might the more readily take place, since the title “port” was often omitted. The new town obliterated the memory of the old, as Neapelis, Naples, on the shore, has taken place of the inland city (whatever its name was), or Utrecht, it is said, has displaced the old Roman town, the remains of which are three miles off at Vechten (Roland who lived at Utrecht, says that Roman antiquities were daily dug up at Vechten, where were the remains of a Roman fort. Pal. p.

105), or Sichem is called Neapolis, Nablous, which yet was 3 miles off (Jerome). Erriha is, probably, at least the second representative of the ancient Jericho; the Jericho of the New Testament, built by Herod, not being the Jericho of the prophets. The Corcyra of Greek history gave its name to the island; it is replaced by a Corfu in a different but near locality, which equally gives its name to the island now. The name of Venetia migrated with the inhabitants of the province, who fled from Attila, some 23 miles, to a few of the islands on the coast, to become again the name of a great republic (Gibbon c. 35). In our own country, "old Windsor" is said to have been the residence of the Saxon monarchs; the present Windsor, was originally "new Windsor: old Sarum was the Cathedral city, until the reign of Henry iii: but, as the old towns decayed, the new towns came to be called Windsor, Sarum, though not the towns which first had the name. What is now called Shoreham, not many years ago, was called "new Shoreham," in distinction from the neighboring village (In a similar mannery, Alresford Basford, Brentford, Goole, Isleworth, must have been at one time, New Alr. New Basford etc. but, as the more considerable, have appropriated the name which belonged to both the old and new places).

William of Tyre describes Ashkelon as (Willermus Tyr. Hist. xvii. 22, in *Gesta Dei per Frances* p. 924. The solidity of the walls and of the cement are described in the same way, in the latter part of the 17th. century by d'Arvieux and Padre Malone da Maleo Terra Santa p. 471) "situated on the sea-shore, in the form of a semi-circle, whose chord or diameter lies on the sea-shore; but its circumference or arc on the land, looking east. The whole city lies as in a trench, all declining toward the sea, surrounded on all sides by raised mounds, on which are walls with numerous towers of solid masonry, the cement being harder than the stone, with walls of due thickness and of height proportionate; it is surmounted also with outer walls of the same solidity." He then describes its four gates, east-north-south toward Jerusalem, Gaza, Joppa, and the west, called the sea-gate, because "by it the inhabitants have an egress to the sea."

A modern traveler, whose description of the ruins exactly agrees with this, says (Dr. Richardson, *Travels along the Mediterr.* ii. p. 201), "the walls are built on a ridge of rocks that winds round the town in a semicircular direction and terminates at each end in the sea; the ground falls within the walls in the same manner, that it does without, so that no part of it could be seen from the outside of the walls. There is no bay nor shelter for

shipping, but a small harbor advancing a little way into the town toward its eastern extremity seems to have been formed for the accommodation of such small craft as were used in the better days of the city.” The harbor, moreover, was larger during the crusades, and enabled Ascalon to receive supplies of corn from Egypt and thereby to protract its siege. Sultan Bibars filled up the port and cast stones into the sea, 1270 A.D., and destroyed the remains of the fortifications, for fear that the Franks, after their treaty with the king of Tunis, should bring back their forces against Islamism and establish themselves there (According to Ibn Ferat in Reinaud Chroniques Arabes n. xcvi. Michaud, Biblioth. des. Croisades iv. 525). Yet Abulfeda, who wrote a few years later, calls it “one of the Syrian ports of Islam” (Ab. Tab. Syriae p. 78, Kohler).

This city, so placed on the sea, and in which too the sea enters, cannot be the Ashkelon, which had a port, which was a town distinct from it. The Ascalon of the Philistines, which existed down into Christian times, must have been inland.

Benjamin of Tudela in the 12th century who had been on the spot, and who is an accurate eyewitness,^{f363} says, “From Ashdod are two parasangs to Ashkelonah (Benj. Tud. pronounces the new city Ashkelona, as the Latins did. When speaking himself, he says Ashkelon); this is new Ashkelon which Ezra the priest built on the sea-shore, and they at first called it Benibra.”^{f364} Jerome has another Benamerium, north of Zoar, now N’ mairah. Tristram land of Moab p. 57. A well in Ascalon is mentioned by Eusebius. “There are many wells (named) in Scripture and are yet shewn in the country of Gerar, and at Ascalon.” v. φρεαρ ^{<5421>}. William of Tyre says: “It has no fountains, either within the compass of the walls, or near it; but it abounds in wells, both within and without, which supply palatable water, fit for drinking. For greater caution the inhabitants had built some cisterns within, to receive rain-water. Benj. of T. also says, “There in the midst of the city is a well which they call Beer Ibrahim-al-khalil (the well of Abraham the friend (of God)) which he dug in the days of the Philistines.” Keith mentions “20 fountains of excellent water opened up anew by Ibrahim Pasha.” p. 274), and it is distant from the old Ashkelon, which is desolate, four parasangs. “When the old Ashkelon perished, is unknown. If, as seems probable from some of the antiquities dug up, the Ashkelon, at which Herod was born and which he beautified, was the seaport town, commerce probably attracted to it gradually the inhabitants of the neighboring town of Ascalon, as the population of the Piraeus now exceeds that of Athens.

The present Ashkelon is a ghastly skeleton; all the frame-work of a city, but none there. "The soil is good," but the "peasants who cultivate it" prefer living outside in a small village of mud-huts, exposed to winds and sand-storms, because they think that God has abandoned it, and that evil spirits (the Jan and the Ghul) dwell there (Mr. Cyril Graham in Keith p. 376).

Even the remains of antiquity, where they exist, belong to later times. A hundred men excavated in Ashkelon for 14 days in hopes of finding treasure there. They dug 18 feet below the surface, and found marble shafts, a Corinthian capital, a colossal statue with a Medusa's head on its chest, a marble pavement and white-marble pedestal (Travels of Lady H. Stanhope, iii. 159-169). The excavation reached no Philistine Ashkelon.

"Broken pottery," "pieces of glass," "fragments of polished marble," "of ancient columns, cornices etc." (Keith, p. 378) were the relics of a Greek Gaza.

Though then it is a superfluity of fulfillment, and what can be found belongs to a later city, still what can be seen has an impressive correspondence with the words Gaza is "forsaken;" for there are miles of fragments of some city connected with Gaza. The present Gaza occupies the southern half of a hill built with stone for the Moslem conquerors of Palestine. (Robinson, Travels, ii. 38):

"Even the traces of its former existence, its vestiges of antiquity, are very rare; occasional columns of marble or gray granite, scattered in the streets and gardens, or used as thresholds at the gates and doors of houses, or laid upon the front of watering-troughs. One fine Corinthian capital of white marble lies inverted in the middle of the street."

These belong then to times later than Alexander, since whose days the very site of Gaza must have changed its aspect.

Ashkelon shall be a desolation The site of the port of Ascalon was well chosen, strong, overhanging the sea, fenced from the land, stretching forth its arms toward the Mediterranean, as if to receive in its bosom the wealth of the sea, yet shunned by the poor hinds around it. It lies in such a living death, that it is (Smith, Ibid. p. 66 note) "one of the most mournful scenes of utter desolation" which a traveler "even in this land of ruins ever beheld." But this too cannot be the Philistine city. The sands which are

pressing hard upon the solid walls of the city, held back by them for the time, yet threatening to overwhelm “the spouse of Syria,” and which accumulated in the plain below, must have buried the old Ashkelon, since in this land, where the old names so cling to the spot, there is no trace of it.

Ekron shall be uprooted And at Akir and Esdud (Volney Voyage en Syrie c. 31. p. 311. Keith p. 370) “celebrated at present, for its scorpions,” the few stones, which remain, even of a later town, are but as gravestones to mark the burial place of departed greatness.

Jerome: “In like way, all who glory in bodily strength and worldly power and say, “By the strength of my hand I have done it,” shall be left desolate and brought to nothing in the day of the Lord’s anger.” And “the waster,” they who by evil words and deeds injure or destroy others and are an offence unto them, these shall be east out shamefully, into outer darkness, Rup.: “when the saints shall receive the fullest brightness” in the ‘mid-day’ of the Sun of Righteousness. The judgment shall not be in darkness, save to them, but in mid-day, so that the justice of God shall be clearly seen, and darkness itself shall be turned into light, as was said to David, “Thou didst this thing secretly, but I will do it before all Israel and before the sun” (~~2~~2 Samuel 12:12); and our Lord, “Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops” (~~12~~12 Luke 12:3); and Paul, “the Lord shall come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart” (~~4~~4 1 Corinthians 4:5). And “they who by seducing words in life or in doctrine uprooted others, shall be themselves rooted up” (~~15~~15 Matthew 15:13).

~~2~~2 **Zephaniah 2:5.** The “woe” having been pronounced on the five cities apart, now falls upon the whole nation of the Cherethites or Philistines. The Cherethites are only named as equivalent to the Philistines, probably as originally a distinct immigration of the same people (See the note at ~~9~~9 Amos 9:7, vol. i. p. 333). The name is used by the Egyptian slave of the Amalekite (~~1~~1 Samuel 30:14) for those whom the author of the first book of Samuel calls Philistines (~~1~~1 Samuel 30:16). Ezekiel uses the name parallel with that of “Philistines,” with reference to the destruction which God would bring upon them.^{f365}

The word of the Lord Comes not to them, but “upon” them, overwhelming them. To them He speaketh not in good, but in evil; not in grace, but in anger; not in mercy, but in vengeance. Philistia was the first enemy of the

Church. It showed its enmity to Abraham and Isaac and would fain that they should not sojourn among them (^{<01234>}Genesis 21:34; 26:14,15,28). They were the hindrance that Israel should not go straight to the promised land (^{<01317>}Exodus 13:17). When Israel passed the Red Sea (^{<01514>}Exodus 15:14), “sorrow” took hold of them.” They were close to salvation in body, but far in mind. They are called “Canaan,” as being a chief nation of it (^{<01521>}Genesis 15:21), and in that name lay the original source of their destruction. They inherited the sins of Canaan and with them his curse, preferring the restless beating of the barren, bitter sea on which they dwelt, “the waves of this troublesome world,” to being a part of the true Canaan. They would absorb the Church into the world, and master it, subduing it to the pagan Canaan, not subdue themselves to it, and become part of the heavenly Canaan.

^{<3116>}**Zephaniah 2:6.** *The seacoast shall be dwellings and cottages* (The words “band of the sea” are repeated with emphasis, ^{<3115>}Zephaniah 2:5,6, and the first words Zephaniah 5:7), literally, cuttings or diggings. This is the central meaning of the word; the place of the Cherethites (the cutters off) shall be “cheroth” of shepherds, places which they dug up that their flocks might be enclosed therein. The tracts once full of fighting men, the scourge of Judah, should be so desolate of its former people, as to become a sheep-walk. Men of peace should take the place of its warriors.

So the shepherds of the Gospel with their flocks have entered into possession of war-like nations, turning them to the Gospel. They are shepherds, the chief of whom is that Good Shepherd, who laid down His Life for the sheep. And these are the sheep of whom He speaks, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice; and there shall be one fold and One Shepherd” (^{<3106>}John 10:16).

^{<3117>}**Zephaniah 2:7.** *And the coast shall be* Or probably, “It shall be a portion for the remnant of the house of Judah.” He uses the word, employed in the first assignment of the land to Israel;^{f366} and of the whole people as belonging to God, “Jacob is the ‘lot’ of His inheritance” (^{<1531>}Deuteronomy 32:9). “The tract of the sea,” which, with the rest, was assigned to Israel, which, for its unfaithfulness, was seldom, even in part, possessed, and at this time, was wholly forfeited, should be a portion for the mere “remnant” which should be brought back. David used the word in his psalm of thanksgiving, when he had brought the ark to the city of

David, how God had “confirmed the covenant to Israel, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance” (^{<1368>}1 Chronicles 16:18; ^{<19451>}Psalms 105:11); and Asaph, “He cast out the he athen before them and divided to them an inheritance by line” (^{<1985>}Psalms 78:55). It is the reversal of the doom threatened by Micah, “Thou shalt have none, that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord” (^{<3115>}Micah 2:5). The word is revived by Ezekiel in his ideal division of the land to the restored people (^{<26713>}Ezekiel 47:13). “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (^{<61129>}Romans 11:29). The promise, which had slumbered during Israel’s faithlessness, should be renewed to its old extent. (“Nullum tempus ecclesiae,” though said of its property): “There is no prescription against the Church.” The boat threatens to sink; it is tossed, half-submerged, by the waves; but its Lord “rebukes the wind and the sea; wind and sea obey Him, and there is a great calm” (^{<41835>}Matthew 8:26,27).

For the remnant of the house of Juda Yet, who save He in whose hand are human wills, could now foresee that Judah should, like the ten tribes, rebel, be carried captive, and yet, though like and worse than Israel in its sin (^{<2418>}Jeremiah 3:8-11; ^{<21648>}Ezekiel 16:48-52; 23:11), should, unlike Israel, be restored? The re-building of Jerusalem was, their enemies pleaded, contrary to sound policy (^{<15112>}Ezra 9:12-16): the plea was for the time accepted, for the rebellions of Jerusalem were recorded in the chronicles of Babylon” (^{<15101>}Ezra 9:19-22). Yet the falling short of the complete restoration depended on their own wills. God turned again their captivity; but they only, “whose spirit God stirred,” willed to return. The temporal restoration was the picture of the spiritual. They who returned had to give up lands and possessions in Babylonia, and a remnant only chose the land of promise at such cost. Babylonia was as attractive as Egypt formerly.

In the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening One city is named for all. “They shall lie down,” he says, continuing the image from their flocks, as Isaiah, in a like passage, “The first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety” (^{<21043>}Isaiah 4:30).

The true Judah shall overspread the world; but it too shall only be a remnant; these shall, in safety, “go in and out and find pasture” (^{<61010>}John 10:9). “In the evening” of the world they shall find their rest, for then also in the time of antichrist, the Church shall be but a remnant still. “For the Lord their God shall visit them,” for He is the Good Shepherd, who came to seek the one sheep which was lost and who says of Himself, “I will seek

that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick” (^{<3346>}Ezekiel 34:16); and who in the end will more completely “turn away their captivity,” bring His banished to their everlasting home, the Paradise from which they have been exiled, and separate forever the sheep from the goats who now oppress and scatter them abroad (Ezekiel 17—19).

^{<3108>}**Zephaniah 2:8.** *I* Dionysius: “God, Who know all things, “I heard” that is, have known within Me, in My mind, not anew but from eternity, and now I shew in effect that I know it; wherefore I say that I hear, because I act after the manner of one who perceiveth something anew.” I, the just Judge, heard (see ^{<2306>}Isaiah 16:6; ^{<2489>}Jeremiah 48:39; ^{<2752>}Ezekiel 35:12,13). He was present and “heard,” even when, because He avenged not, He seemed not to hear, but laid it up in store with Him to avenge in the due time (^{<1524>}Deuteronomy 32:34,35).

The reproach of Moab and the reviling of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached My people Both words, “reproached, reviled,” mean, primarily, cutting speeches; both are intensive, and are used of blaspheming God as unable to help His people, or reviling His people as forsaken by Him. If directed against man, they are directed against God through man. So David interpreted the taunt of Goliath, “reviled the armies of the living God” (^{<0975>}1 Samuel 17:26,36,45, coll. 10. 25), and the Philistine cursed David “by his gods” (^{<0975>}1 Samuel 17:43). In a Psalm David complains, “the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me” (^{<0990>}Psalm 69:10 (9)); and a Psalm which cannot be later than David, since it declares the national innocency from idolatry, connects with their defeats, the voice of him “that reproacheth and blasphemeth” (^{<0446>}Psalm 44:16 (17), joining the two words used here). The sons of Corah say, “with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, where is thy God?” (^{<0920>}Psalm 42:10). So Asaph, “The enemy hath reproached, the foolish people hath blasphemed Thy Name” (^{<1740>}Psalm 74:10,18); and, “we are become a reproach to our neighbors. Wherefore should the pagan say, where is their God? render unto our neighbors — the reproach wherewith they have reproached Thee, O Lord” (^{<1704>}Psalm 79:4,10,12). And Ethan, “Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants — wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Thine Anointed” (^{<1880>}Psalm 89:50,51).

In history the repeated blasphemies of Sennacherib and his messengers are expressed by the same words. In earlier times the remarkable concession of Jephthah, “Wilt not thou possess what Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? so whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out before us, them will we possess” (^{<07124>}Judges 11:24), implies that the Ammonites claimed their land as the gift of their god Chemosh, and that that war was, as that later by Sennacherib, waged in the name of the false god against the True.

The relations of Israel to Moab and Ammon have been so habitually misrepresented, that a review of those relations throughout their whole history may correct some wrong impressions. The first relations of Israel toward them were even tender. God reminded His people of their common relationship and forbade him even to take the straight road to his own future possessions, across their hand against their will. “Distress them not, nor contend with them,” it is said of each, “for I will not give thee of their land for a possession, for I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession” (^{<01019>}Deuteronomy 2:9,19). Idolaters and hostile as they were, yet, for their father’s sake, their title to their land had the same sacred sanction, as Israel’s to his. “I,” God says, “have given it to them as a possession.” Israel, to their own manifest inconvenience, “went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, but came not within the border of Moab” (^{<07118>}Judges 11:18). By destroying Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan, Israel removed formidable enemies, who had driven Moab and Ammon out of a portion of the land which they had conquered from the Zamzummim and Anakim (^{<01203>}Deuteronomy 2:10,20,21), and who threatened the remainder, “Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites” (^{<02125>}Numbers 21:25,31).

Heshbon, Dibon, Jahaz, Medeba, Nophah “were cities in the land of the Amorites, in” which “Israel dwelt.” The exclusion of Moab and Ammon from the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation (^{<02313>}Deuteronomy 23:3) was not, of course, from any national antipathy, but intended to prevent a debasing intercourse; a necessary precaution against the sensuousness of their idolatries. Moab was the first^{f367} in adopting the satanic policy of Balaam, to seduce Israel by sensuality to their idolatries; but the punishment was appointed to the partners of their guilt, the Midianites (^{<02517>}Numbers 25:17; 31), not to Moab. Yet Moab was the second nation, whose ambition God overruled to chasten His people’s idolatries. Eglon, king of Moab, united with himself Ammon and Amalek against Israel. The object of the invasion was, not the recovery of the

country which Moab had lost to the Amorites but, Palestine proper. The strength of Moab was apparently not sufficient to occupy the territory of Reuben. They took possession only of “the city of palm trees” (^{<0013>}Judges 3:13); either the ruins of Jericho or a spot close by it; with the view apparently of receiving reinforcements or of securing their own retreat by the ford. This garrison enabled them to carry their forays over Israel, and to hold it enslaved for 18 years. The oppressiveness of this slavery is implied by the cry and conversion of Israel to the Lord, which was always in great distress. The memory of Eglon, as one of the oppressors of Israel, lived in the minds of the people in the days of Samuel (^{<0013>}1 Samuel 12:9). In the end, this precaution of Moab turned to its own destruction, for, after Eglon was slain, Ephraim, under Ehud, took the fords, and the whole garrison, 10,000 of Moab’s warriors, “every strong man and every man of might” (^{<0013>}Judges 3:29), were intercepted in their retreat and perished. For a long time after this, we hear of no fresh invasion by Moab. The trans-Jordanic tribes remained in unquestioned possession of their land for 300 years (Judges 40:26), when Ammon, not Moab, raised the claim, “Israel took away my land” (Judges 40:13), although claiming the land down to the Arnon, and already being in possession of the southernmost portion of that land, Aroer, since Israel smote him “from Aroer unto Minnith” (Judges 40:33). The land then, according to a law recognized by nations, belonged by a twofold right to Israel;

(1) that it had been won, not from Moab, but from the conquerors of Moab, the right of Moab having passed to its conquerors (Grotius de jure belli et pacis, iii. c. vi. n. vii. and notes);

(2) that undisputed and unbroken possession “for time immemorial” as we say, 300 years, ought not to be disputed (Id. Ibid. ii. c. iv. n. ii. and ix. and notes).

The defeat by Jephthah stilled them for near 50 years until the beginning of Saul’s reign, when they refused the offer of the “men of Jubesh-Gilead” to serve them, and, with a mixture of insolence and savagery, annexed as a condition of accepting that entire submission, “that I may thrust out all your right eyes, to lay it as a reproach to Israel” (^{<0113>}1 Samuel 11:1,2). The signal victory of Saul (^{<0111>}1 Samuel 11:11) still did not prevent Ammon, as well as Moab, from being among the enemies whom Saul “worsted” (not, “vexed,” ^{<0147>}1 Samuel 14:47). The term “enemies” implies that “they” were the assailants. The history of Naomi shows their prosperous condition, that

the famine, which desolated Judah (~~1800~~Ruth 1:1), did not reach them, and that they were a prosperous land, at peace, at that time, with Israel. If all the links of the genealogy are preserved (~~1802~~Ruth 4:21,22), Jesse, David's father, was grandson of a Moabitess, Ruth, and perhaps on this ground David entrusted his parents to the care of the king of Moab (~~1823~~1 Samuel 22:3,4). Sacred history gives no hint, what was the cause of his terrible execution upon Moab. But a Psalm of David speaks to God of some blow, under which Israel had reeled. "O God, Thou hast abhorred us, and broken us in pieces; Thou hast been wroth: Thou hast made the land to tremble and cloven it asunder; heal its breaches, for it shaketh; Thou hast showed Thy people a hard thing, Thou hast made it drink wine of reeling" (~~1913~~Psalm 60:3-5); and thereon David expresses his confidence that God would humble Moab, Edom, Philistia. While David then was engaged in the war with the Syrians of Mesopotamia and Zobah (Psalm 60 title), Moab must have combined with Edom in an aggressive war against Israel. "The valley of salt", ^{f368} where Joab returned and defeated them, was probably within Judah, since "the city of salt" (~~1852~~Joshua 15:62) was one of the six cities of the wilderness. Since they had defeated Judah, they must have been overtaken there on their return^{f369}. Yet this too was a religious war. "'Thou,'" David says "hast given a 'banner to them that fear Thee,' to be raised aloft because of the truth" (~~1910~~Psalm 60:4).

There is no tradition, that the kindred Psalm of the sons of Corah, Psalm 44 belongs to the same time. Yet the protestations to God of the entire absence of idolatry could not have been made at any time later than the early years of Solomon. Even were there Maccabee Psalms, the Maccabees were but a handful among apostates. They could not have pleaded the national freedom from unfaithfulness to God, nor, except in two subordinate and self-willed expeditions (1 Macc. 5:56-60,67), were they defeated. Under the Persian rule, there were no armies nor wars; no immunity from idolatry in the later history of Judah. Judah did not in Hezekiah's time go out against Assyria; the one battle, in which Josiah was slain, ended the resistance to Egypt. Defeat was, at the date of this Psalm, new and surprising, in contrast with God's deliverances of old (~~1941~~Psalm 44:1-3); yet the inroad, by which they had suffered, was one of spoiling (~~1940~~Psalm 44:10,12), not of subdual. Yet this too was a religious war, from their neighbors. They were slain for the sake of God (~~1942~~Psalm 44:22), they were covered with shame on account of the reproaches and blasphemies (~~1943~~Psalm 44:13,14) of those who triumphed over God, as

powerless to help; they were a scorn and derision to the petty nations around them. It is a Psalm of unshaken faith amid great prostration: it describes in detail what the 19th Psalm sums up in single heavy words of imagery; but both alike complain to God of what His people had to suffer for His sake.

The insolence of Ammon in answer to David's message of kindness to their new king, like that to the men of Jabesh Gilead, seems like a deliberate purpose to create hostilities. The relations of the previous king of Ammon to David, had been kind (~~2~~ 2 Samuel 10:2,3), perhaps, because David being a fugitive from Israel, they supposed him to be Saul's enemy. The enmity originated, not with the new king, but with "the princes of the children of Ammon" (~~2~~ 2 Samuel 10:3). David's treatment of these nations (~~2~~ 2 Samuel 8:2; 12:31) is so unlike his treatment of any others whom he defeated, that it implies an internecine warfare, in which the safety of Israel could only be secured by the destruction of its assailants.

Mesha king of Moab records one war, and alludes to others, not mentioned in Holy Scripture. He says, that before his own time, "Omri, king of Israel, afflicted Moab many days;" that "his son (Ahab) succeeded him, and he too said, 'I will afflict Moab.'" This affliction he explains to be that "Omri possessed himself of the land of Medeba" (expelling, it is implied, its former occupiers) "and that" (apparently, Israel) (A gap in the broken stone probably contained the subject. I see that Schlottman also supplied, "Israel;" Dr. Ginsburg conjectured, less probably, "the enemy"), "dwelt therein," "(in his days and in) the days of his son forty years." He was also in possession of Nebo, and "the king of Israel" (apparently Omri,) "buil(t) Jahaz and dwelt in it, when he made war with me".^{f370} Jahaz was near Dibon. In the time of Eusebius, it was still "pointed out between Dibon and Medeba" (Jerome de situ loc. Hebr. Opp. iii. 230, v. **Ιεσσα** , "Jassa, where Sihon king of the Amorites is defeated").

Mesha says, "And I took it to annex it to Dibon." It could not, according to Mesha also, have been south of the Arnon, since Aroer lay between Dibon and the Arnon, and Mesha would not have annexed to Dibon a town beyond the deep and difficult ravine of the Arnon, with Aroer lying between them. It was certainly north of the Arnon, since Israel was not permitted to come within the border of Moab, but it was at Jahaz that Sihon met them and fought the battle in which Israel defeated him and gained possession of his land, "from the Arnon to the Jabbok"

(⁰²¹³Numbers 21:23-25). It is said also that “Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites from Aroer which is on the edge of the river Arnon” (⁰¹²⁶Deuteronomy 2:36. “The ruins of Araayr), the Aroer of the Scriptures, standing on the edge of the precipice.” Burckhardt, travels in Syria p. 372), and the city which is in the river^{f371} unto Gilead (⁰¹³⁶Joshua 13:16,18). Aroer on the edge of the river Arnon, and the city which is in the river” Arnon, again occur in describing the southern border of Reuben, among whose towns Jahaz is mentioned, with Beth-Baal-Meon and Kiriathaim, which have been identified.

The afflicting then of Moab by Omri, according to Mesha, consisted in this, that he recovered to Israel a portion of the allotment of Reuben, between 9 and 10 hours in length (The distance is taken from Porter’s Handbook pp. 299-301) from north to south, of which, in the time of Israel’s weakness through the civil wars which followed on Jeroboam’s revolt, Moab must have dispossessed Reuben. Reuben had remained in undisturbed possession of it, from the first expulsion of the Amorites to the time at least of Rehoboam, about five hundred years. (The beginning of Rehoboam’s reign is, in the received Chronology, 477 B.C.): “The men of Gad” still “dwelt in Ataroth,” Mesha says, “from time immemorial.”

The picture, which Mesha gives, is of a desolation of the southern portion of Reuben. For, “I rebuilt,” he says, “Baal-Meon, Kiriathaim, Aroer, Beth-bamoth, Bezer, Beth-Diblathaim, Beth-baal-Meon.” Of Beth-Bamoth, and probably of Bezer, Mesha says, that they had previously been destroyed.^{f372} But Reuben would not, of course, destroy his own cities. They must then have been destroyed either by Mesha’s father, who reigned before him, when invading Reuben, or by Omri, when driving back Moab into his own land, and expelling him from these cities. “Possibly” they were dismantled only, since Mesha speaks only of Omri’s occupying Medeba, Ataroth, and Jahaz. He held these three cities only, leaving the rest dismantled, or dismantling them, unable to place defenders in them, and unwilling to leave them as places of aggression for Moab. But whether they ever were fortified towns at all, or how they were desolated, is mere conjecture. Only they were desolated in these wars.

But it appears from Mesha’s own statement, that neither Omri nor Ahab invaded Moab proper. For in speaking of his successful war and its results, he mentions no town south of the Arnon. He must have been a tributary king, but not a foot of his land was taken. The subsequent war was not a

mere revolt, nor was it a mere refusal to pay tribute, of which Mesha makes no complaint. Nor could the tribute have been oppressive to him, since the spoils, left in the encampment of Moab and his allies shortly after his revolt, is evidence of such great wealth. The refusal to pay tribute would have involved nothing further, unless Ahaziah had attempted to enforce it, as Hezekiah refused the tribute to Assyria, but remained in his own borders. But Ahaziah, unlike his brother Jehoram who succeeded him, seems to have undertaken nothing, except the building of some ships for trade (~~408~~2 Chronicles 20:35,36). Mesha's war was a renewal of the aggression on Reuben.

Heshbon is not mentioned, and therefore must, even after the war, have remained with Reuben.

Mesha's own war was an exterminating war, as far as he records it. "I fought against the city," (Ataroth), he says, "and took it, and killed all the mighty of the city for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and of Moab;" "I fought against it (Nebo) from break of day until noon and took it, and slew all of it, 7,000 men; the ladies and maidens I devoted to Ashtar Chemosh;" to be desecrated to the degradations of that sensual idolatry. The words too^{f373} "Israel perished with an everlasting destruction" stand clear, whether they express Mesha's conviction of the past or his hope of the future.

The war also, on the part of Moab, was a war of his idol Chemosh against God. Chemosh, from first to last, is the agent. "Chemosh was angry with his land;" "Chemosh (was pleased) with it in my days;" "I killed the mighty for the well-pleasing of Chemosh;" "I took captive thence all (...) and dragged it along before Chemosh at Kiriath;" "Chemosh said to me, Go and take Nebo against Israel;" "I devoted the ladies and maidens to Ashtar-Chemosh;" "I took thence the vessels of IHVH and dragged (The word in Hebrew is used of contumelious dragging along the ground) them before Chemosh;" "Chemosh drove him (the king of Israel) out before (my face);" "Chemosh said to me, Go down against Horonaim." "Chemosh (...) it in my days."

Contemporary with this aggressive war against Israel must have been the invasion by "the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, the great multitude from beyond the sea, from Syria" (~~400~~2 Chronicles 20:1,2), in the reign of Jehoshaphat, which brought such terror upon Judah. It preceded the invasion of Moab by Jehoshaphat in union with Jehoram and

the king of Edom. For the invasion of Judah by Moab and Ammon took place, while Ahab's son, Ahaziah, was still living. For it was after this, that Jehoshaphat joined with Ahaziah in making ships to go to Tarshish (^{<405>}2 Chronicles 20:35,36. "And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah"). But the expedition against Moab was in union with Jehoram who succeeded Ahaziah. The abundance of wealth which the invaders of Judah brought with them, and the precious jewels with which they had adorned themselves, show that this was no mere marauding expedition, to spoil; but that its object was, to take possession of the land or at least of some portion of it. They came by entire surprise on Jehoshaphat, who heard of them first when they were at Hazazon-Tamar or Engedi, some 36 1/2 miles from Jerusalem (300 stadia. Josephus, Ant. ix. 1. 2). He felt himself entirely unequal to meet them, and cast himself upon God. There was a day of public humiliation of Judah at Jerusalem. "Out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord" (^{<404>}2 Chronicles 20:4). Jehoshaphat, in his public prayer, owned, "we have no might against this great company which cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee" (^{<403>}2 Chronicles 20:13). He appeals to God, that He had forbidden Israel to invade Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, so that they turned away from them and destroyed them not; and now these rewarded them by "coming to cast us out of Thy possession which Thou hast given us to inherit" (^{<400>}2 Chronicles 20:10). One of the sons of Asaph foretold to the congregation, that they might go out fearlessly, for they should not have occasion to fight. A Psalm, ascribed to Asaph, records a great invasion, the object of which was the extermination of Israel. "They have said; Come and let us cut them off from" being "a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (^{<374>}Psalm 83:4). It had been a secret confederacy. "They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people" (^{<383>}Psalm 83:3). It was directed against God Himself, that is, His worship and worshipers. "For they have taken counsel in heart together; against Thee do they make a covenant" (^{<385>}Psalm 83:5). It was a combination of the surrounding petty nations; Tyre on the north, the Philistines on the west; on the south the Amalekites, Ishmaelites, Hagarenes; eastward, Edom, Gebal, Moab, Ammon. But its most characteristic feature was, that Assur (this corresponds with no period after Jehoshaphat) occupies a subordinate place to Edom and Moab, putting them forward and helping "them." "Assur also," Asaph says, "is joined with them; they have become an arm to the children of Lot" (^{<338>}Psalm

83:8). This agrees with the description, “there is come against thee a great multitude from beyond the sea, from Syria.”

Scripture does not record, on what ground the invasion of Moab by Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, with the tributary king of Edom, was directed against Moab proper; but it was the result doubtless of the double war of Moab against Reuben and against Judah. It was a war, in which the strength of Israel and Moab was put forth to the utmost. Jehoram had mustered all Israel (^{<1200>}2 Kings 3:6); Moab had gathered all who had reached the age of manhood and upward, “everyone who girded on a girdle and upward” (^{<1200>}2 Kings 3:21). The three armies, which had made a seven days’ circuit in the wilderness, were on the point of perishing by thirst and falling into the hands of Moab, when Elisha in God’s name promised them the supply of their want, and complete victory over Moab. The eager cupidity of Moab, as of many other armies, became the occasion of his complete overthrow. The counsel with which Elisha accompanied his prediction, “ye shall smite every fenced city and every choice city, and every good tree ye shall fell, and all springs of water ye shall stop up, and every good piece of land ye shall waste with stones” (^{<1200>}2 Kings 3:19), was directed, apparently, to dislodge an enemy so inveterate. For water was essential to the fertility of their land and their dwelling there. We hear of no special infliction of death, like what Mesha records of himself. The war was ended by the king of Moab’s sacrificing the heir-apparent of the king of Edom (See the note at ^{<1200>}Amos 2:12, vol. i. p. 268), which naturally created great displeasure against Israel, in whose cause Edom thus suffered, so that they departed to their own land and finally revolted.

Their departure apparently broke up the siege of Ar and the expedition. Israel apparently was not strong enough to carry on the war without Edom, or feared to remain with their armies away from their own land, as in the time of David, of which Edom might take the advantage. We know only the result.

Moab probably even extended her border to the south by the conquest of Horonaim (This is marked on the Moabite stone, as a subsequent and distinct expedition).

After this, Moab is mentioned only on occasion of the miracle of the dead man, to whom God gave life, when cast into Elisha’s sepulchre, as he came in contact with his bones. Like the Bedouin now, or the Amalekites of old,

“the bands of Moab came into the land, as the year came” (^{<12130>}2 Kings 13:20). Plunder, year by year, was the lot of Israel at the hands of Moab.

On the east of Jordan, Israel must have remained in part (as Mesha says of the Gadites of Arocr) in their old border. For after this, Hazael, in Jehu’s reign, smote Israel “from Aroer which is by the river Arnon” (^{<12003>}2 Kings 10:33); and at that time probably Amman joined with him in the exterminating war in Gilead, destroying life before it had come into the world, “that they might enlarge their border” (See the note at ^{<12000>}Amos 1:13, vol. i. p. 252). Jeroboam ii, 825 B.C.; restored Israel “to the sea of the plain” (^{<12002>}2 Kings 16:25), that is, the dead sea, and, (as seems probable from the limitation of that term in Deuteronomy, ‘under Ashdoth-Pisgah eastward,’ ^{<10007>}Deuteronomy 3:17) to its northern extremity, lower in latitude than Heshbon, yet above Nebo and Medeba, leaving accordingly to Moab all which it had gained by Mesha. Uzziah, a few years later, made the Ammonites tributaries (^{<10008>}2 Chronicles 26:8) 810 B.C. But 40 years later 771 B.C., Pul, and, after yet another 30 years, 740, Tiglath-pileser having carried away the trans-Jordanic tribes (^{<10005>}1 Chronicles 5:26), Moab again possessed itself of the whole territory of Reuben. Probably before. For 726 B.C., when Isaiah foretold that “the glory of Moab should be contemned with all that great multitude” (^{<23164>}Isaiah 16:14), he hears the wailing of Moab throughout all his towns, and names all those which had once been Reuben’s and of whose conquest or possession Moab had boasted (^{<23150>}Isaiah 15:1,2,4), Nebo, Medeba, Dibon, Jahaz, Baiith; as also those not conquered then (^{<23154>}Isaiah 15:4,5,1), Heshbon, Elealeh; and those of Moab proper, Luhith, Horonaim, and its capitals, Ar-Moab and Kir-Moab. He hears their sorrow, sees their desolation and bewails with their weeping (^{<23169>}Isaiah 16:9).

He had prophesied this before (“That the prophecy must be from any other older prophet, is an inference from grounds of nought.” Del.), and now, three years (^{<23163>}Isaiah 16:13,14) before its fulfillment by Tiglath-Pileser, he renews it. This tender sorrow for Moab has more the character of an elegy than of a denunciation; so that he could scarcely lament more tenderly the ruin of his own people. He mentions also distinctly no sin there except pride. The pride of Moab seems something of common notoriety and speech. “We have heard” (^{<23165>}Isaiah 16:6). Isaiah accumulates words, to express the haughtiness of Moab; “the pride of Moab; exceeding proud; his pride and his haughtiness and his wrath,” pride overpassing bounds, upon others. His words seem to be formed so as to keep this one bared thought

before us, as if we were to say “pride, prideful, proudness, pridefulness;” and withal the unsubstantialness of it all, “the unsubstantiality of his lies.” Pride is the source of all ambition; so Moab is pictured as retiring within her old bounds, “the fords of Arnon,” and thence asking for aid; her petition is met by the counter-petition, that, if she would be protected in the day of trouble, the out-casts of Israel might lodge with her now: “be thou a covert to her from the face of the spoiler” (⁻²³¹⁶⁴Isaiah 16:4,5). The prophecy seems to mark itself out as belonging to a time, after the two and a half tribes had been desolated, as stragglers sought refuge in Moab, and when a severe infliction was to come on Moab: “the (⁻²³¹⁶⁴Isaiah 16:14) remnant” shall be “small, small not great.”

Yet Moab recovered this too. It was a weakening of the nation, not its destruction. Some 126 years after the prophecy of Isaiah, 30 years after the prophecy of Zephaniah, Moab, in the time of Jeremiah, was in entire prosperity, as if no visitation had ever come upon her. What Zephaniah says of the luxuriousness of his people, Jeremiah says of Moab; “Moab is one at ease from his youth; he is resting on his lees; and he hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity” (⁻²⁴⁸¹¹Jeremiah 48:11). They “say, We are mighty and strong men for the war” (⁻²⁴⁸¹⁴Jeremiah 48:14). Moab was a “strong staff, a beautiful rod” (⁻²⁴⁸¹⁷Jeremiah 48:17); “he magnified himself against the Lord” (⁻²⁴⁸²⁶Jeremiah 48:26); “Israel was a derision to him” (⁻²⁴⁸²⁷Jeremiah 48:27;); “he skipped for joy” at his distress. Jeremiah repeats and even strengthens Isaiah’s description of his pride; “his pride, proud” (⁻²⁴⁸²⁹Jeremiah 48:29), he repeats, “exceedingly; his loftiness,” again “his pride, his arrogancy, and the haughtiness of his heart.” Its “strongholds” (⁻²⁴⁸³⁸Jeremiah 48:18) were unharmed; all its cities, “far and near,” are counted one by one, in their prosperity (⁻²⁴⁸⁰¹Jeremiah 48:1,3,5,21-24); its summer-fruits and vintage were plenteous; its vines, luxuriant; all was joy and shouting. Whence should this evil come? Yet so it was with Sodom and Gomorrah just before its overthrow. It was, for beauty, “a paradise of God; well-watered everywhere; as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt” (⁻⁰¹³⁰Genesis 13:10). In the morning “the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of the furnace” (⁻²⁴⁸²⁸Jeremiah 19:28). The destruction foretold by Jeremiah is far other than the affliction spoken of by Isaiah. Isaiah prophesies only a visitation, which should reduce her people: Jeremiah foretells, as did Zephaniah, captivity and the utter destruction of her cities. The destruction foretold is complete. Not of individual cities only, but of the whole he

saith, "Moab is destroyed" (^{2480b}Jeremiah 48:4). "The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape, and the valley shall perish and the high places shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken" (^{2480b}Jeremiah 48:8). Moab himself was to leave his land. "Flee, save your lives, and ye shall be like the heath in the wilderness. Chemosh shall go forth into captivity; his priests and his princes together. Give pinions unto Moab, that it may flee and get away, and her cities shall be a desolation, for there is none to dwell therein" (^{2470b}Jeremiah 17:6). It was not only to go into captivity, but its home was to be destroyed. "I will send to her those who shall upheave her, and they shall upheave her, and her vessels they shall empty, all her flagons" (all that aforesaid contained her) "they shall break in pieces" (^{2482b}Jeremiah 48:12). Moab is destroyed and her cities" (^{2485b}Jeremiah 48:15); "the spoiler of Moab is come upon her; he hath destroyed the strongholds" (^{2488b}Jeremiah 48:18). The subsequent history of the Moabites is in the words, "Leave the cities and dwell in the rock, dwellers of Moab, and be like a dove which nesteth in the sides of the mouth of the pit" (^{2483b}Jeremiah 48:28). The purpose of Moab and Ammon against Israel which Asaph complains of, and which Mesha probably speaks of, is retorted upon her. "In Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come and let us cut it off from being a nation. Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord" (^{2482b}Jeremiah 48:2,42).

Whence should this evil come? They had, with the Ammonites, been faithful servants of Nebuchadnezzar against Judah (^{1242b}2 Kings 24:2). Their concerted conspiracy with Edom, Tyre, Zidon, to which they invited Zedekiah (^{2472b}Jeremiah 27:2 following), was dissolved. Nebuchadnezzar's march against Judaea did not touch them, for they "skipped with joy" (^{2487b}Jeremiah 48:27) at Israel's distresses. The connection of Baalis, king of the Ammonites, with Ishmael (^{2404b}Jeremiah 40:14; 41:10) the assassin of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon made governor over the land (^{1252b}2 Kings 25:22-26; ^{2406b}Jeremiah 40:6; 41:1) out of their own people, probably brought down the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar. For Chaldeans too were included in the slaughter (^{2408b}Jeremiah 41:3). The blow seems to have been aimed at the existence of the people, for the murder of Gedaliah followed upon the rallying of the Jews "out of all the places whither they had been driven" (^{2402b}Jeremiah 40:12). It returned on Ammon itself; and on Moab who probably on this, as on former occasions, was associated with it. The two nations, who had escaped at the destruction of Jerusalem, were warred

upon and subdued by Nebuchadnezzar in the 23d year of his reign (Josephus, Ant. xi. 9, 7), the 5th after the destruction of Jerusalem.

And then probably followed that complete destruction and disgraced end, in which Isaiah, in a distinct prophecy, sees Moab trodden down by God as “the heap of straw is trodden down in the waters (the kethib) of the dunghill, and he (Moab) stretcheth forth his hands in the midst thereof, as the swimmer stretcheth forth his hands to swim, and He, God, shall bring down his pride with the treacheries of his hands” (^{<22510>}Isaiah 25:10-12). It speaks much of the continued hostility of Moab, that, in prophesying the complete deliverance for which Israel waited, the one enemy whose destruction is foretold, is Moab and those pictured by Moab. “We have waited for Him and He will save us — For in this mountain (Zion) shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under Him” (^{<22510>}Isaiah 25:9,10).

After this, Moab, as a nation, disappears from history. Israel, on its return from the captivity, was again enticed into idolatry by Moabite and Ammonite wives, as well as by those of Ashdod and others (^{<46323>}Nehemiah 13:23-26), Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Egyptians, Amorites (^{<43910>}Ezra 9:1). Sanballat also, who headed the opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, was a Moabite (^{<46210>}Nehemiah 2:10; 4:1-8); Tobiah, an Ammonite (^{<46102>}Nehemiah 4:2,9). Yet it went no further than intrigue and the threat of war. They were but individuals, who cherished the old hostility. In the time of the Maccabees, the Ammonites, not Moab, “with a mighty power and much people” were in possession of the Reubenite cities to Jazar (1 Macc. 5:6,8). It was again an exterminating war, in which the Jews were to be destroyed (1 Macc. 5:9,10,27). After repeated defeats by Judas Maccabaeus, the Ammonites “hired the Arabians” (1 Macc. 5:39) (not the Moabites) to help them, and Judas, although victorious, was obliged to remove the whole Israelite population, “all that were in the land of Gilead, from the least unto the greatest, even their wives, and their children, and their stuff, a very great host, to the end they might come into the land of Judaea” (1 Macc. 5:45). The whole population was removed, obviously lest, on the withdrawal of Judas’ army, they should be again imperiled. As it was a defensive war against Ammon, there is no mention of any city, south of the Arnon, in Moab’s own territory. It was probably with the view to magnify descendants of Lot, that Josephus speaks of the Moabites as being “even yet a very great nation” (Ant. i. 11. 3). Justin’s account, that there is (Dial. n. 119, p. 218. Oxford Translation) “even now

a great multitude of Ammonites,” does not seem to me to imply a national existence. A later writer says (Anon. in Job ap. Origen i. 852), “not only the Edomites but the Ammonites and Moabites too are included in the one name of Arabians.”

Some chief towns of Moab became Roman towns, connected by the Roman road from Damascus to Elath. Ar and Kir-Moab in Moab proper became Areopolis and Charac-Moab, and, as well as Medeba and Heshbon in the country which had been Reuben's, preserve traces of Roman occupancy. As such, they became Christian Sees. The towns, which were not thus revived as Roman, probably perished at once, since they bear no traces of any later building.

The present condition of Moab and Ammon is remarkable in two ways;

- (1) for the testimony which it gives of its former extensive population;
- (2) for the extent of its present desolation.

“How fearfully,” says an accurate and minute observer (Seetzen Reisen i. 412), “is this residence of old kings and their land wasted!” It gives a vivid idea of the desolation, that distances are marked, not by villages which he passes but by ruins.^{f374} (Ibid. 411): “From these ruined places, which lay on our way, one sees how thickly inhabited the district formerly was.” Yet the ground remained fruitful. It was partly abandoned to wild plants, the wormwood and other shrubs;^{f375} partly, the artificial irrigation, essential to cultivation in this land, was destroyed;^{f376} here and there a patch was cultivated; the rest remained barren, because the crops might become the prey of the spoiler,^{f377} or the thin population had had no heart to cultivate it. A list of 33 destroyed places which still retained their names, was given to Seetzen (Ibid. 416), “of which many were cities in times of old, and beside these, a great number of other wasted villages. One sees from this, that, in the days of old, this land was extremely populated and flourishing, and that destructive wars alone could produce the present desolation.” And thereon he adds the names of 40 more ruined places. Others say (Irby and Mangles (May 14) p. 113): “The whole of the fine plains in this quarter” (the south of Moab) “are covered with sites of towns, on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one; and as all the land is capable of rich cultivation, there can be no doubt that this country, now so deserted, once presented a continued picture of plenty and fertility.” (Tristram, land of Moab, pp. 100, 101): “Every knoll” (in the highlands of

Moab) “is covered with shapeless ruins. — The ruins consist merely of heaps of squared and well-fitting stones, which apparently were erected without mortar.” (Ibid. 99):

“One description might serve for all these Moabite ruins. The town seems to have been a system of concentric circles, built round a central fort, and outside the buildings the rings continue as terraces, the gardens of the old city. The terraces are continuous between the twin hillocks and intersect each other at the foot”

(Palmer, desert of the Exodus ii. 473, 474). Ruined villages and towns, broken walls that once enclosed gardens and vineyards, remains of ancient roads; everything in Moab tells of the immense wealth and population, which that country must have once enjoyed.”

The like is observed of Ammon.^{f378} His was direct hatred of the true religion. It was not mere exultation at the desolation of an envied people. It was hatred of the worship of God. “Thus saith the Lord God; “Because thou saidst, Aha, against My sanctuary, because it was profaned” (³²⁷⁸Ezekiel 25:3); and against the land of Israel, because it was desolated; and against the house of Judah, because they went into captivity.” The like temper is shown in the boast, “Because that Moab and Seir do say; Behold the house of Judah is like unto the pagan” (³²⁷⁸Ezekiel 25:8), that is, on a level with them.

Forbearing and long-suffering as Almighty God is, in His infinite mercy, He does not, for that mercy’s sake, bear the direct defiance of Himself. He allows His creatures to forget Him, not to despise or defy Him. And on this ground, perhaps, He gives to His prophecies a fulfillment beyond what the letter requires, that they may be a continued witness to Him. The Ammonites, some 1600 years ago, ceased to “be remembered among the nations.” But as Nineveh and Babylon, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, by being what they are, are witnesses to His dealings, so the way in which Moab and Ammon are still kept desolate is a continued picture of that first desolation. Both remain rich, fertile; but the very abundance of their fertility is the cause of their desolation. God said to Ammon, as the retribution on his contumely: “therefore, behold, I give thee to the children of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments in thee, and place their dwellings in thee; “they” shall eat thy fruit and “they” shall drink thy milk; and I will make Rabbah a dwelling-place of camels, and the children of Ammon a couching- place for flocks”

(~~3274~~ Ezekiel 25:4,5). Of Moab He says also, "I will open the side of Moab from the cities, which are on his frontiers, the glory of the country, unto the men of the East with the Ammonites" (~~3278~~ Ezekiel 25:8,10). And this is an exact description of the condition of the land at this day. All travelers describe the richness of the soil. We have seen this as to Moab. But the history is one and the same. One of the most fertile regions of the world, full of ruined towns, destitute of villages or fixed habitations, or security of property, its inhabitants ground down by those, who have succeeded the Midianites and the Amalekites, "the children of the East." "Thou canst not find a country like the Belka," says the Arabic proverb (Burckhardt, Syria, p. 369. "On both sides of the road" (near Naour) "were the vestiges of ancient field-enclosures." Ibid. 365), but "the inhabitants cultivate patches only of the best soil in that territory when they have a prospect of being able to secure the harvest against the invasion of enemies." "We passed many ruined cities," said Lord Lindsay (Travels, p. 279),

"and the country has once been very populous, but, in 35 miles at least, we did not see a single village; the whole country is one vast pasturage, overspread by the flocks and herds of the Anezee and Beni Hassan Bedouins."

The site of Rabbath Amman was well chosen for strength. Lying (Irby and Mangles June 14. c. 8. p. 146) "in a long valley" through which a stream passed, "the city of waters" could not easily be taken, for its inhabitants compelled to surrender from hunger or thirst. Its site, as the eastern bound of Peraea (Josephus, B. J. iii. 3. 3), "the last place where water could be obtained and a frontier fortress against the wild tribes beyond" (Grote in Smith's Bible Dictionary, "Rabbah"), marked it for preservation. In Greek times, the disputes for its possession attest the sense of its importance. In Roman, it was one of the chief cities of the Decapolis, though its population was said to be a mixture of Egyptians, Arabians, Phoenicians (Strabo xvi. 2. 33. p. 760. Cas.). The coins of Roman Emperors to the end of the second century contain symbols of plenty, where now reigns utter desolation (Ritter, West-Asien viii. 1157). In the 4th century, it and two other now ruined places, Bostra and Gerasa, are named as "most carefully and strongly walled." It was on a line of rich commerce filled with strong places, in sites well selected for repelling the invasions of the neighboring nations (Amm. Marc. xiv. 8. 13). Centuries advanced. It was greatly beautified by its Roman masters. The extent and wealth of the Roman city are attested both by the remains of noble edifices on both sides of the

stream, and (Buckingham Arab tribes p. 67, 73) by pieces of pottery, which are the traces of ancient civilized dwelling, strewed on the earth two miles from the city. (Ibid. 77):

“At this place, Amman, as well as Gerasa and Gamala, three colonial settlements within the compass of a day’s journey from one another, there were five magnificent theaters and one amphitheater, besides temples, baths, aqueducts, naumachia, triumphal arches.”

(See Burckhardt’s description of its ruins. *Travels in Syria*, pp. 357-360): “Its theater was the largest in Syria; its colonnade had at least 50 columns.” The difference of the architecture shows that its aggrandizement must have been the work of different centuries: its “castle walls are thick, and denote a remote antiquity; large blocks of stone are piled up without cement and still hold together as well as if recently placed.” It is very probably the same which Joab called David to take, after the city of waters had been taken; within it are traces of a temple with Corinthian columns, the largest seen there, yet “not of the best Roman times.”

Yet Amman, the growth of centuries, at the end of our 6th century was destroyed. For (Abulf. Tab. Syr. p. 91) “it was desolate before Islam, a great ruin.” (Tristram. *Land of Israel* p. 551):

“No where else had we seen the vestiges of public magnificence and wealth in such marked contrast with the relapse into savage desolation.”

But the site of the old city, so well adapted either for a secure refuge for its inhabitants or for a secure depository for their plunder, was, on that very ground, when desolated of its inhabitants, suited for what God, by Ezekiel, said it would become, a place, where the men of the East should stable their flocks and herds, secure from straying. What a change, that its temples, the center of the worship of its successive idols, or its theaters, its places of luxury or of pomp, should be stables for that drudge of man, the camel, and the stream which gave it the proud title of “city of waters” their drinking trough! And yet of the cities whose destruction is prophesied, this is foretold of Rabbah alone, as in it alone is it fulfilled! “Ammon,” says Lord Lindsay (*The Holy Land*, pp. 279, 281, 283), “was situated on both sides of the stream; the dreariness of its present aspect is quite indescribable. It looks like the abode of death; the valley stinks with dead camels; one of them was rotting in the stream; and though we saw none

among the ruins, they were absolutely “covered” in every direction with their dung.” “Bones and skulls of camels were mouldering there (in the area of the ruined theater) and in the vaulted galleries of this immense structure.” “It is now quite deserted, except by the Bedouins, who water their flocks at its little river, descending to it by a “wady,” nearly opposite to a theater (in which Dr. Mac Lennan saw great herds and flocks) and by the “akiba.” Re-ascending it, we met sheep and goats by thousands, and camels by hundreds.” Another says (G. Robinson’s travels in Palestine and Syria ii. 175), “The space intervening between the river and the western hills is entirely covered with the remains of buildings, now only used for shelter for camels and sheep.” Buckingham mentions incidentally, that he was prevented from sleeping at night (Travels among the Arab tribes, Ruins of Ammon, p. 73) “by the bleating of flocks and the neighing of horses, barking of dogs etc.” Another speaks of (Lord C. Hamilton in Keith, p. 271) “a small stone building in the Acropolis now used as a shelter for flocks.” While he was (Id. Ibid. p. 269) “traversing the ruins of the city, the number of goats and sheep, which were driven in among them, was exceedingly annoying, however remarkable, as fulfilling the prophecies” (Seetzen Reisen i. 394). “Before six tents fed sheep and camels” (Prof. Kruse Anmerkung. Ibid. T. iv. p. 216). “Ezekiel points just to these (²³⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 20:5), which passage Seetzen cites (Ezekiel 50:31). And in fact the ruins are still used for such stalls.”

The prophecy is the very opposite to that upon Babylon, though both alike are prophecies of desolation. Of Babylon Isaiah prophesies, “It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it bedwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make fold there, but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and the ostriches shall dwell there, and the jackals shall cry in their desolate houses, and howling creatures in their pleasant palaces” (²³¹³⁰Isaiah 13:20). And the ruins are full of wild beasts (See Rich Mem. p. 27,30; Buckingham, ii. 307; Sir R. K. Porter, Travels ii. 342. 387; Kenneir Memoirs, p. 279; Keppel’s Narr. i. 179, 180; Layardm Nineveh and Babylon, quoted by Keith on Prophecy pp. 466, 467).

Of Rabbah, Ezekiel prophesied that it should be “a possession for the men of the East, and I” (²³²⁰⁴Ezekiel 25:4,5), God says, “will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks;” and man’s lawlessness fulfills the will and word of God.

<319>Zephaniah 2:9. *Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts* Life especially belongs to God, since He Alone is Underived Life. “He hath life in Himself” (~~<1816>~~ John 5:26). He is entitled “the living God,” as here, in tacit contrast with the dead idols of the Philistines (~~<1972>~~ 1 Samuel 17:26,36), with idols generally (~~<2400>~~ Jeremiah 10:10); or against the blasphemies of Sennacherib (~~<1294>~~ 2 Kings 19:4,16), the mockeries of scoffers (~~<2236>~~ Jeremiah 23:36), of the awe of His presence (~~<1655>~~ Deuteronomy 5:25 (5:26 in Hebrew)), His might for His people (~~<1130>~~ Joshua 3:10); as the object of the soul’s longings (Psalms of the sons of Korah, ~~<941>~~ Psalm 42:2; 84:2), the nearness in the Gospel, “children of the living God” (~~<3110>~~ Hosea 1:10 (2:1 in Hebrew)). “Since He can swear by no greater, He sware by Himself” (~~<3063>~~ Hebrews 6:13). Since mankind are ready mostly to believe that God means well with them, but are slow to think that He is in earnest in His threats, God employs this sanction of what He says, twice only in regard to His promises or His mercy (~~<2498>~~ Isaiah 49:18; ~~<2730>~~ Ezekiel 33:10); everywhere else to give solemnity to His threats.^{f379} The appeal to the truth of His own being (Gesenius, Maurer, etc. (with a strange conception of God) render “ita vivam.” Ewald rightly, “as true as I live”) in support of the truth of His words is part of the grandeur of the prophet Ezekiel in whom it chiefly occurs. God says in the same meaning, by Myself have I sworn, of promises which required strong faith (~~<10216>~~ Genesis 22:16. (so often referred to) ~~<2452>~~ Isaiah 45:23, or by Thy Right Hand, that is, the might which He would put forth).

Saith the Lord of Hosts Their blasphemies had denied the very being of God, as God, to whom they preferred or likened their idols; they had denied His power or that He could avenge, so He names His Name of power, “the Lord of the hosts” of heaven against their array against His border, I, “the Lord of hosts” who can fulfill what I threaten, and “the God of Israel” who Myself am wronged in My people, will make “Moab as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah.” Sodom and Gomorrah had once been flourishing cities, on the borders of that land, which Israel had won from the Amorite, and of which Moab and Ammon at different times possessed themselves, and to secure which Ammon carried on that exterminating war. For they were to the east of the plain “between Bethel and Ai,” where Lot made his choice, “in the plain or circle of Jordan” (~~<1131>~~ Genesis 13:1,3,11), the well known title of the tract, through which the Jordan flowed into the Dead Sea. Near this, lay Zoar, (Ziara) (See the description of Ziara “once a place of considerable importance” in Tristram,

land of Moab pp. 328, 330) beneath the caves whither Lot, at whose prayer it had been spared, escaped from its wickedness. Moab and Ammon had settled and in time spread from the spot, wherein their forefathers had received their birth. Sodom, at least, must have been in that part of the plain, which is to the east of the Jordan, since Lot was bidden to flee to the mountains, with his wife and daughters, and there is no mention of the river, which would have been a hindrance (^{<01917>}Genesis 19:17-23). Then it lay probably in that (Tristram, Land of Israel, p. 367) “broad belt of desolation” in the plain of Shittim, as Gomorrah and others of the Pentapolis may have lain in “the sulphur-sprinkled expanse” between El Riha (on the site of Jericho) and the dead sea, “covered with layers of salt and gypsum which overlies the loamy subsoil, literally, fulfilling the descriptions of Holy Writ (says an eye-witness), “Brimstone and salt and burning, that it is not sown nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein” (^{<02923>}Deuteronomy 29:23): “a fruitful land turned into saltness” (^{<09734>}Psalms 107:34). “No man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it” (^{<24918>}Jeremiah 49:18). An elaborate system of artificial irrigation was carried through that cis-Jordanic tract, which decayed when it was desolated of man, and that desolation prevents its restoration.

The doom of Moab and Ammon is rather of entire destruction beyond all recovery, than of universal barrenness. For the imagery, that it should be the “breeding” (literally, ‘possession’) “of nettles” would not be literally compatible, except in different localities, with that of “salt-pits,” which exclude all vegetation. Yet both are united in Moab. The soil continues, as of old, of exuberant fertility; yet in part, from the utter neglect and insecurity of agriculture it is abandoned to a rank and encumbering vegetation; elsewhere, from the neglect of the former artificial system of irrigation, it is wholly barren. The plant named is one of rank growth, since outcasts could lie concealed under it (^{<18307>}Job 30:7). The preponderating authority seems to be for “mollach,” the Bedouin name of the “mallow,” Prof. E. H. Palmer says (Manuscript letter), “which,” he adds, “I have seen growing in rank luxuriance in Moab, especially in the sides of deserted Arab camps.”

The residue of My people shall spoil them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them Again, a remnant only, but even these shall prevail against them, as was first fulfilled in Judas Maccabaeus (1 Macc. 5:6-8).

ⲕⲓⲛⲓ Zephaniah 2:10. *This shall they have for their pride* Literally, “This to them instead of their pride.” Contempt and shame shall be the residue of the proud man; the exaltation shall be gone, and all which they shall gain to themselves shall be shame. Moab and Ammon are the types of heretics (Jerome and Rup.). As they were akin to the people of God, but hating it; akin to Abraham through a lawless birth, but ever molesting the children of Abraham, so heretics profess to believe in Christ, to be children of Christ, and yet ever seek to overthrow the faith of Christians. As the Church says, “My mothers children are” “angry with me” (~~2005~~ Song of Solomon 1:5). They seem to have escaped the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (pagan sins), and to have found a place of refuge (Zoar); and yet they are in darkness and cannot see the light of faith; and in an unlawful manner they mingle, against all right, the falsehood of Satan with the truth of God; so that their doctrines become, in part, “doctrines of devils,” in part have some stamp of the original truth. To them, as to the Jews, our Lord says, “Ye are of your father the devil.” While they profess to be children of God, they claim by their names to have God for their Father (Moab) and to be of His people (Ammon), while in hatred to His true children they forfeit both. As Moab seduced Israel, so they the children of the Church. They too enlarge themselves against the borders of the Church, rending off its children and making themselves the Church. They too utter reproaches and revilings against it. “Take away their revilings,” says an early father (Tertullian, de Praescr. Haer. c. 42, p. 493. Oxford Translation), “against the law of Moses, and the prophets, and God the Creator, and they have not a word to utter.” They too (Ibid. c. 37. p. 488) “remove the old landmarks which the fathers” (the prophets and Apostles) “have set.” And so, barrenness is their portion; as, after a time, heretics ever divide, and do not multiply; they are a desert, being out of the Church of God: and at last the remnant of Judah, the Church, possesses them, and absorbs them into herself.

ⲕⲓⲛⲓ Zephaniah 2:11. *The Lord will be terrible unto* (upon) *them* that is, upon Moab and Ammon, and yet not in themselves only, but as instances of His just judgment. Whence it follows, “For He will famish all the gods of the earth” (Rup.). Miserable indeed, to whom the Lord is terrible! Whence is this? Is not God by Nature sweet and pleasurable and serene, and an Object of longing? For the Angels ever desire to look into Him, and, in a wonderful and unspeakable way, ever look and ever long to look. For miserable they, whose conscience makes them shrink from the face of

Love. Even in this life they feel this shrinking, and, as if it were some lessening of their grief, they deny it, as though this could destroy the truth, which they ‘hold down in unrighteousness.’“ (^{<6118>}Romans 1:18).

For He will famish all the gods of the earth Taking away “the fat of their sacrifices, and the wine of their drink-offerings” (^{<6328>}Deuteronomy 32:38). Within 80 years from the death of our Lord (Between 103 and 105 A.D.), the governor of Pontus and Bithynia wrote officially to the Roman Emperor, that (Pliny, Epist. x. 32. p. 584. ed. Steph.) “the temples had been almost left desolate, the sacred rites had been for a long time intermitted, and that the victims had very seldom found a purchaser,” before the persecution of the Christians, and consulted him as to the amount of its continuance. Toward the close of the century, it was one of the Pagan complaints, which the Christian Apologist had to answer (Tertullian, Apol. c. 42. see p. 90. note o. Oxford Translation) “they are daily melting away the revenues of our temples.” The prophet began to speak of the subdual of Moab and Ammon; he is borne on to the triumphs of Christ over all the gods of the Pagan, when the worship of God should not be at Jerusalem only, but “they shall worship Him, every one from his place.”

Even all the isles of the pagan For this is the very note of the Gospel, that, Cyril: “each who through faith in Christ was brought to the knowledge of the truth, by Him, and with Him, “worshipeth from his place” God the Father; and God is no longer known in Judaea only, but the countries and cities of the Pagan, though they be separated by the intervening sea from Judaea, no less draw near to Christ, pray, glorify, thank Him unceasingly. For formerly “His name” was “great in Israel” (^{<9761>}Psalms 76:1), but now He is well known to all everywhere; earth and sea are full of His glory, and so every one ‘worshipeth Him from his place;’ and this is what is said, ‘As I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord’ (^{<0442>}Numbers 14:21).” “The isles” are any distant lands on the seashore (^{<2572>}Jeremiah 25:22, following; ^{<2315>}Ezekiel 26:15, following; ^{<1720>}Psalms 72:10), especially the very distant (^{<2369>}Isaiah 66:19); but also Asia Minor (^{<2111>}Daniel 11:1,8) and the whole coast of Europe, and even the Indian Archipelago (NOTE: ^{<2715>}Ezekiel 27:15. Gesenius, Thes. sub. v.), since the ivory and ebony came from its “many isles.” Zephaniah revives the term, by which Moses had spoken of the dispersion of the sons of Japhet: “By these were the ‘isles of the Gentiles’ divided in their lands, every one after his tongue” (^{<0115>}Genesis 10:5). He adds the word, “all;” all, wherever they had

been dispersed, every one from his place, shall worship God. One universal worship shall ascend to God from all everywhere. So Malachi prophesied afterward; “From the rising up of the sun even to the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and “in every place” incense shall be offered unto God and a pure offering, for My Name shall be great among the pagan, saith the Lord of hosts” (^{<3011>}Malachi 1:11). Even a Jew (Abarbanel) says here:

“This, without doubt, refers to the time to come, when all the inhabitants of the world shall know that the Lord is God, and that His is the greatness and power and glory, and He shall be called the God of the whole earth.”

The “isles” or “coasts of the sea” are the more the emblem of the Church, in that, Cyril: “lying, as it were, in the sea of this world and encompassed by the evil events in it, as with bitter waters, and lashed by the most vehement waves of persecutions, the Churches are yet founded, so that they cannot fall, and rear themselves aloft, and are not overwhelmed by afflictions. For, for Christ’s sake, the Churches cannot be shaken, and ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against them’ (^{<1018>}Matthew 16:18).”

^{<3012>}**Zephaniah 2:12.** *Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by My sword* Literally, “Ye Ethiopians also, the slain of My sword are they.” Having summoned them to His throne, God speaks of them, not to them anymore; perhaps in compassion, as elsewhere in indignation.^{f380} The Ethiopians were not in any direct antagonism to God and His people, but allied only to their old oppressor, Egypt. They may have been in Pharaoh Necho’s army, in resisting which, as a subject of Assyria, Josiah was slain: they are mentioned (^{<2409>}Jeremiah 46:9) in that army which Nebuchadnezzar smote at Carchemish in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. The prophecy of Ezekiel implies rather, that Ethiopia should be involved in the calamities of Egypt, than that it should be itself invaded. “Great terror shall be in Ethiopia, ‘when the slain shall fall in Egypt’ (^{<2504>}Ezekiel 30:4).” “Ethiopia and Lybia and Lydia etc. and all the men of the land that is in league, shall fall ‘with these,’ by the sword” (^{<2505>}Ezekiel 30:5). “They also that ‘uphold Egypt’ shall fall” (^{<2506>}Ezekiel 30:6). Syene, the frontier-fortress over against Ethiopia, is especially mentioned as the boundary also of the destruction. “Messengers” God says, “shall go forth from Me to make the careless Ethiopians afraid” (^{<2509>}Ezekiel 30:9), while the storm was bursting in its full desolating force upon Egypt. All the other cities, whose destruction is

foretold, are cities of lower or upper Egypt (Zoan, Aven Pi-beseth, Tehaphnehes, Sin, on the eastern boundary; Noph (Memphis) the capital of Lower Egypt; Pathros, probably a district of Upper Egypt; No (Thebes) its capital; Syene, its last town to the south).

But such a blow as that foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel must have fallen heavily upon the allies of Egypt. We have no details, for the Egyptians would not, and did not tell of the calamities and disgraces of their country. No one does. Josephus, however, briefly but distinctly says,^{f381} that after Nebuchadnezzar had in the 23rd year of his reign, the 5th after the destruction of Jerusalem, “reduced into subjection Moab and Ammon, he invaded Egypt, with a view to subdue it,” “killed its then king, and having set up another, captured for the second time the Jews in it and carried them to Babylon.” The memory of the devastation by Nebuchadnezzar lived on apparently in Egypt, and is a recognized fact among the Muslim historians, who had no interest in the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy, of which it does not appear that they even knew. Bokht-nasar (Nebuchadnezzar), they say (Makrizi in DeSacy, *Abdallatif Relation de l’Egypte* p. 247), “made war on the son of Nechas (Necho), slew him and ruined the city of Memphis” and many other cities of Egypt: he carried the inhabitants captive, without leaving one, so that Egypt remained waste forty years without one inhabitant.” Another says (Abdallatif l. c. p. 184), The refuge which the king of Egypt granted to the Jews who fled from Nebuchadnezzar brought this war upon it: for he took them under his protection and would not give them up to their enemy. Nebuchadnezzar, in revenge, marched against the king of Egypt and destroyed the country.” “One may be certain,” says a good authority,^{f381} “that the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar was a tradition generally spread in Egypt and questioned by no one.” Ethiopia was then involved, as an ally, and as far as its contingent was concerned, in the war, in which Nebuchadnezzar desolated Egypt for those 40 years. But, although this fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel, Isaiah, some sixty years before Zephaniah, prophesied a direct conquest of Ethiopia. I “have given,” God says, “Egypt as thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee” (^{238B} Isaiah 43:3). It lay in God’s purpose, that Cyrus should restore His own people, and that his ambition should find its vent and compensation in the lands beyond. It may be that, contrary to all known human policy, Cyrus restored the Jews to their own land, willing to bind them to himself, and to make them a frontier territory toward Egypt, not subject only but loyal to himself. This is quite consistent with the reason which he assigns; “The

Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah” (^{<3100>}Ezra 1:2,3); and with the statement of Josephus, that he was moved thereto by (Ant. xi. 1. 2) “reading the prophecy which Isaiah left, 210 years before.” It is, alas! nothing new to Christians to have mixed motives for their actions: the exception is to have a single motive, “for the glory of God.” The advantage to himself would doubtless flash at once on the founder of a great empire, though it did not suggest the restoration of the Jews. Egypt and Assyria had always, on either side, wished to possess themselves of Palestine, which lay between them. Anyhow, one Persian monarch did restore the Jews; his successor possessed himself of “Egypt, and part, at least, of Ethiopia.” Cyrus wished, it is related (Herodotus i. 153), “to war in person against Babylon, the Bactrians, the Sacae, and Egypt.” He perished, as is known, before he had completed (Ibid. 214 and Rawl. notes p. 350) the third of his purposed conquests. Cambyses, although after the conquest of Egypt he planned ill his two more distant expeditions, reduced (Herodotus iii. 97) “the Ethiopians bordering upon Egypt” ((Sir G. Wilkinson in Rawl. Herodotus ii. 487. n. 10) “lower Ethiopia and Nubia”), and these “brought gifts” permanently to the Persian Sovereign. Even in the time of Xerxes, the Ethiopians had to furnish their contingent of troops against the Greeks. Herodotus describes their dress and weapons, as they were reviewed at Doriscus (Herodotus vii. 69). Cambyses, then, did not lose his hold over Ethiopia and Egypt, when forced by the rebellion of Pseudo-Smerdis to quit Egypt.

^{<3103>}**Zephaniah 2:13.** Zephaniah began by singling out Judah amid the general destruction, “I will also stretch out My Hand upon Judah” (^{<3104>}Zephaniah 1:4); he sums up the judgment of the world in the same way; “He will stretch out, or, Stretch He forth, “His Hand against the north and destroy Asshur, and make Nineveh a desolation.” Judah had, in Zephaniah’s time, nothing to fear from Assyria. Isaiah (^{<2305>}Isaiah 39:6) and Micah (^{<3104>}Micah 4:10) had already foretold, that the captivity would be to Babylon. Yet of Assyria alone the prophet, in his own person, expresses his own conformity with the mind of God. Of others he had said, “the word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, and I will destroy thee; As I live, saith the Lord, Moab shall be as Sodom. Ye also, O Ethiopians, the slain of My sword are they.” Of Assyria alone, by a slight inflection of the word, he expresses that he goes along with this, which he announces. He does not say as an imprecation, “May He stretch forth His hand;” but gently, as

continuing his prophecies, “and,” joining on Asshur with the rest; only instead of saying “He will stretch forth,” by a form almost insulated in Hebrew, he says, “And stretch He forth His Hand.” In a way not unlike, David having declared God’s judgments, “The Lord trieth the righteous; and the wicked and the lover of violence doth His soul abhor, subjoineth, On the wicked rain He snares,” signifying that he (as all must be in the Day of judgment), is at one with the judgment of God. This is the last sentence upon Nineveh, enforcing that of Jonah and Nahum, yet without place of repentance now. He accumulates words expressive of desolateness. It should not only be a “desolation” (^{<3104>}Zephaniah 2:4,9), as he had said of Ashkelon, Moab and Amman, but a dry, parched (absence of water, ^{<3318>}Job 30:3; ^{<3512>}Psalms 63:2; 105:41; 107:35; ^{<3418>}Isaiah 41:18; ^{<3416>}Jeremiah 2:6; ^{<3613>}Ezekiel 19:13; ^{<3115>}Hosea 2:5), unfruitful (^{<2312>}Isaiah 53:2) land. As Isaiah, under the same words, prophesies that the dry and desolate land should, by the Gospel, be glad, so the gladness of the world should become dryness and desolation. Asshur is named, as though one individual (Asshur is used in this way of the people, considered in and with their king, ^{<2311>}Isaiah 30:31; 31:8), implying the entirety of the destruction; all shall perish as one man; or as gathered into one and dependent upon one, its evil King. “The north” is not only Assyria, in that its armies came upon Judah from the north, but it stands for the whole power of evil (see ^{<2313>}Isaiah 14:13), as Nineveh for the whole beautiful, evil, world. The world with “the princes of this world” shall perish together.

^{<3104>}**Zephaniah 2:14.** *And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her* No desolation is like that of decayed luxury. It preaches the nothingness of man, the fruitlessness of his toils, the fleetingness of his hopes and enjoyments, and their baffling when at their height. Grass in a court or on a once beaten road, much more, in a town, speaks of the passing away of what has been, that man was accustomed to be there, and is not, or is there less than he was. It leaves the feeling of void and forsakenness. But in Nineveh not a few tufts of grass here and there shall betoken desolation, it shall be one wild rank pasture, where “flocks” shall not feed only, but “lie down” as in their fold and continual resting place, not in the outskirts only or suburbs, but in the very center of her life and throng and busy activity, “in the midst of her,” and none shall fray them away. So Isaiah had said of the cities of Aroer, “they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down and none shall make them afraid” (^{<2312>}Isaiah 17:2), and of Judah until its restoration by Christ, that it should be “a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks”

(~~2324~~ Isaiah 32:14, compare ~~2402~~ Jeremiah 6:2). And not only those which are wont to be found in some connection with man, but “all the beasts of a nation”, ^{f382} the troops of wild and savage and unclean beasts which shun the dwellings of man or are his enemies, these in troops have their lair there.

Both the cormorant and the bittern They may be the same. The pelican retires inland to consume its food. Tristram, Houghton, in Smith’s Bible Dictionary, “Pelican” note. It could be a hedgehog.

shall lodge in the upper lintels of it. The “chapiters” (English margin) or capitals of the pillars of the temples and palaces shall lie broken and strewn upon the ground, and among those desolate fragments of her pride shall unclean animals haunt. The pelican has its Hebrew name from vomiting. It vomits up the shells which it had swallowed whole, after they had been opened by the heat of the stomach, and so picks out the animal contained in them (Aristotle, Anim. ix. 10), the very image of greediness and uncleanness. It dwells also not in deserts only but near marshes, so that Nineveh is doubly waste.

A voice shall sing in the windows In the midst of the desolation, the muteness of the hedgehog and the pensive loneliness of the solitary pelican, the musing spectator is even startled by the gladness of a bird, joyous in the existence which God has given it. Instead of the harmony of music and men-singers and women-singers in their palaces shall be the sweet music of some lonely bird, unconscious that it is sitting “in the windows” of those, at whose name the world grew pale, portions of the outer walls being all which remain of her palaces. “Desolation” shall be “in the thresholds,” sitting, as it were, in them; everywhere to be seen in them; the more, because unseen. Desolation is something oppressive; we “feel” its presence. There, as the warder watch and ward at the empty portals, where once was the fullest throng, shall “desolation sit,” that no one enter. “For He shall uncover (hath uncovered, English margin) the cedar-work:” in the roofless palaces, the carved “cedar-work” shall be laid open to wind and rain. Any one must have noticed, how piteous and dreary the decay of any house in a town looks, with the torn paper hanging uselessly on its walls. A poet of our own said niche beautiful ruins of a wasted monastery:

*“For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout the ruins gray.”*

But at Nineveh it is one of the mightiest cities of the world which thus lies waste, and the bared “cedar-work” had, in the days of its greatness, been carried off from the despoiled Lebanon^{f383} or Hermon (Rawl. 5. Emp. i. 385).

Zephaniah 2:15. This utter desolation is “the rejoicing city” (so unlike is it, that there is need to point out that it is the same); this is she, who was full of joy, exulting exceedingly, but in herself, not in God; “that dwelt carelessly,” literally, “securely,” and so carelessly; saying “Peace and safety” (~~317B~~-1 Thessalonians 5:3), as though no evil would come upon her, and so perishing more certainly and miserably (see ~~1718Z~~-Judges 18:27) “That said in her heart,” this was her inmost feeling, the moving cause of all her deeds; “I am and there is none beside me;” literally,^{f384} “and there is no I beside,” claiming the very attribute of God (as the world does) of self-existence, as if it alone were “I,” and others, in respect of her, were as nothing. Pantheism, which denies the being of God, as Author of the world, and claims the life in the material world to be God, and each living being to be a part of God, is only this self-idolatry, reflected upon and carried out in words. All the pride of the world, all self-indulgence which says, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,” all covetousness which ends in this world, speaks this by its acts, “I and no I beside.”

How is she become a desolation Has passed wholly into it, exists only as a desolation, “a place for beasts to lie down in,” a mere den for “the wild beasts. Every one that passeth by her shall hiss” in derision, “and wag” (or wave) “his hand” in detestation, as though putting the hand between them and it, so as not to look at it, or, as it were, motioning it away. The action is different from that of “clapping the hands in exultation” (~~318B~~-Nahum 3:19).

“It is not difficult,” Jerome says, “to explain this of the world, that when the Lord hath stretched forth His Hand over the north and destroyed the Assyrian, the Prince of this world, the world also perishes together with its Princes, and is brought to utter desolation, and is pitied by none, but all hiss and shake their hands at its ruin. But of the Church it seems, at first sight, blasphemous to say that it shall be a pathless desert, and wild beasts shall dwell in her, and that afterward it shall be said insultingly over her; ‘This is the city given up to ill, which “dwelt carelessly and said in her heart, I and none beside.”’ But whoso should consider that of the Apostle, wherein he says, “in the last days perilous times shall come” (~~319E~~-2 Timothy

3:1-5), and what is written in the Gospel, that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (^{<4B412>}Matthew 24:12), so that then shall that be fulfilled, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?” he will not marvel at the extreme desolation of the Church, that, in the reign of antichrist, it shall be reduced to a desolation and given over to beasts, and shall suffer whatever the prophet now describes. For if for unbelief “God spared not the natural branches,” but “brake them off,” and “turned rivers into a wilderness and the water-springs into a dry ground,” and “a fruitful land into barrenness, for the iniquity of them that dwell therein,” why not as to those of whom He had said, “He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs, and there He maketh the hungry to dwell” (^{<49A73>}Psalm 107:33-36); and as to those whom “out of the wild olive He hath grafted into the good olive tree,” why, if forgetful of this benefit, they depart from their Maker and worship the Assyrian, should He not undo them and bring them to the same thirst wherein they were before? Which, whereas it may be understood generally of the coming of antichrist or of the end of the world, yet it may, day by day, be understood of those who feign to be of the Church of God, and “in works deny it, are hearers of the word not doers,” who in vain boast in an outward show, whereas herds that is, troops of vices dwell in them, and brute animals serving the body, and all the beasts of the field which devour their hearts (and pelicans, that is, gluttons (Ribera), whose ‘god is their belly’) and hedgehogs, a prickly animal full of spikes which pricketh whatever it toucheth. After which it is subjoined, that the Church shall therefore suffer this, or hath suffered it, because it lifted itself up proudly and raised its head like a cedar, given up to evil works, and yet promising itself future blessedness, and despising others in its heart, nor thinking that there is any other beside itself, and saying, “I am, and there is no other beside me,” how is it become a solitude, a lair of beasts! For where before, dwelt the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and Angels presided over its ministries, there shall beasts dwell. And if we understand that, every one that passeth by shall hiss, we shall explain it thus; when Angels shall pass through her, and not remain in her, as was their wont, they shall be amazed and marvel, and shall not support and bear her up with their hand, when falling, but shall lift up the hands and shall pass by. Or they shall make a sound as those who mourn. But if we understand this of the devil and his angels, who destroyed the vine also that was brought out of Egypt, we shall say, that through the soul, which before was the temple of God and hath ceased so to be, the serpent passeth, and

hisseth and spitteth forth the venom of his malice in her, and not this only, but setteth in motion his works which figuratively are called hands.”

Rup.:

“The earlier and partial fulfillment of prophecy does not destroy, it rather confirms, the entire fulfillment to come. For whoso heareth of the destruction of mighty cities, is constrained to believe the truth of the Gospel, that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that, after the likeness of Nineveh and Babylon, the Lord will in the end judge the whole world also.”

NOTES ON ZEPHANIAH 3

Zephaniah 3:1. The “woe,” having gone round the pagan nations, again circles round where it began, the “Jerusalem that killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent unto her” (^{<4237>}Matthew 23:37). Woe upon her, and joy to the holy Jerusalem, the “new Jerusalem (^{<682>}Revelation 3:12; 21:10), the Jerusalem which is from above, the mother of us all,” close this prophecy; both in figure; destruction of her and the whole earth, in time, the emblem of the eternal death; and the love of God, the foretaste of endless joy in Him.

Woe “Rebellious and polluted;” “thou oppressive city!”^{f385} The address is the more abrupt, and bursts more upon her, since the prophet does not name her. He uses as her proper name, not her own name, city of peace,” but “rebellious,” “polluted;” then he sums up in one, thou “oppressive city.”

Jerusalem’s sin is threefold, actively rebelling against God; then, inwardly defiled by sin; then cruel to man. So then, toward God, in herself, toward man, she is wholly turned to evil, not in passing acts, but in her abiding state:

- (1) rebellious
- (2) defiled
- (3) oppressive

She is known only by what she has become, and what has been done for her in vain. She is rebellious, and so had had the law; defiled, and so had been cleansed; and therefore her state is the more hopeless.

Zephaniah 3:2. *She obeyed not the Voice* Of God, by the law or the prophets, teaching her His ways; and when, disobeying, He chastened her, “she received not correction,” and when He increased His chastisements, she, in the declining age of the state and deepening evil, turned not unto Him, as in the time of the judges, nor ceased to do evil.

In the Lord she trusted not But in Assyria or Egypt or her idols. Our practical relation to God is summed up in the four words, “Mis-trust self;

trust God.” Man reverses this, and when “self-trust” has of course failed him, then he “mistrusts God” (Ribera on Hosea 7 n. 39).

“Such rarely ask of God, what they hope they may obtain from man. They strain every nerve of their soul to obtain what they want; canvass, flatter, fawn, bribe, court favor; and betake themselves to God when all human help fails. They would be indebted, not to God, but to their own diligence. For the more they receive of God, the less, they see, can they exalt their own diligence, the more they are bound to thank God, and obey Him the more strictly.”

To her God she drew not nigh Even in trouble, when all draw near unto Him, who are not wholly alien from Him; she drew not near by repentance, by faith hope or love, or by works meet for repentance, but in heart remained far from Him. And yet He was “her” own “God,” as He had shown Himself in times past, who changes not, while we change; is faithful to us, while we fail Him; is still our God, while we forget Him; “waits, to have mercy upon us;” shines on us while we interpose our earth-born clouds between us and Him. Dionysius: “Not in body nor in place, but spiritually and inwardly do we approach to the uncircumscribed God,” owning Him as our Father, to whom we daily say “Our Father.”

~~2018~~ **Zephaniah 3:3.** The prophet having declared the wickedness of the whole city, rehearses how each in Church and state, the ministers of God in either, who should have corrected the evil, themselves aggravated it. Not enemies, without, destroy her, but

Her princes within her In the very midst of the flock, whom they should in God’s stead “feed with a true heart,” destroy her as they will, having no protection against them. “Her judges are evening wolves” (see ~~2018~~ Habakkuk 1:8); these who should in the Name of God redress all grievances and wrongs, are themselves like wild beasts, when most driven by famine. “They gnaw not the bones^{f386} until the morrow or on the morrow” (literally, in the morning). They reserve nothing until the morning light, but do in darkness the works of darkness, shrinking from the light, and, in extreme rapacity, devouring at once the whole substance of the poor. As Isaiah says, “Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves” (~~2013~~ Isaiah 1:23), and “The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard: the spoil of the poor is in your houses” (~~2014~~ Isaiah 3:14). And Ezekiel, “Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves, ravening the

prey to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain” (^{<3227>}Ezekiel 22:27).

^{<3184>}**Zephaniah 3:4.** *Her prophets are light*, boiling and bubbling, up, like water boiling over, ^{f387} empty boasters claiming the gift of prophecy, which they have not; “boldly and rashly pouring out what they willed as they willed;” promising good things which shall not be. So they are “her” prophets, to whom they “prophesy smooth things” (see ^{<3121>}Micah 2:11), “the prophets of this people” not the prophets of God; “treacherous persons” (literally, men of treacheries) wholly given to manifold treacheries against God in whose Name they spake and to the people whom they deceived. Jerome: “They spake as if from the mouth of the Lord and uttered everything against the Lord.” “The leaders of the people,” those who profess to lead it aright, Isaiah says, “are its misleaders” (^{<23915>}Isaiah 9:15 (9:16 in English)). “Thy prophets,” Jeremiah says, “have seen vain and foolish things for thee; they have seen for thee false visions and causes of banishment” (^{<2514>}Lamentations 2:14).

Her priests have polluted her sanctuary Literally, “holiness,” and so holy rites, persons (^{<1588>}Ezra 8:28), things, places (as the sanctuary), sacrifices. All these they polluted, being themselves polluted; they polluted first themselves, then the holy things which they handled, handling them as they ought not; carelessly and irreverently, not as ordained by God; turning them to their own use and self-indulgence, instead of the glory of God; then they polluted them in the eyes of the people, “making them to abhor the offering of the Lord” (^{<1027>}1 Samuel 2:17), since, living scandalously, they themselves regarded the Ministry entrusted to them by God so lightly. Their office was to “put difference between holy and unholy and between clean and unclean, and to teach the children all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by Moses” (^{<1300>}Leviticus 10:10,11); that they “should sanctify themselves and be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (^{<18144>}Leviticus 11:44; 19:2, etc.). But they on the contrary, God says by Ezekiel, “have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no difference between holy and profane, and have taught none between clean and unclean” (^{<3226>}Ezekiel 22:26). “Holy” and “unholy” being the contradictory of each other, these changed what God had hallowed into its exact contrary. It was not a mere short-coming, but an annihilation (so to speak), of God’s purposes.

Cyril:

“The priests of the Church then must keep strict watch, not to profane holy things. There is not one mode only of profaning them, but many and divers. For priests ought to be purified both in soul and body, and to cast aside every form of abominable pleasure. Rather should they be resplendent with zeal in well-doing, remembering what Paul saith, ‘walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh’ (^{<4856>}Galatians 5:16).”

They have oppressed, done violence, to the law Openly violating it (The construction with the accusative of person occurs in ^{<3726>}Ezekiel 22:26; ^{<1086>}Proverbs 8:36; ^{<2028>}Jeremiah 22:3); or straining it, or secretly wresting and using its forms to wrong and violence, as in the case of Naboth and of Him, of whom Naboth thus far bore the Image. “‘We have a law, and by our law He ought to die’ (^{<4807>}John 19:7). Law exists to restrain human violence; these reversed God’s ordinances; violence and law changed places: first, they did violence to the majesty of the law, which was the very voice of God, and then, through profaning it, did violence to man. Forerunners herein of those, who, when Christ came, “transgressed the commandment of God, and made it of none effect by their traditions” (^{<1056>}Matthew 15:6); omitting also the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith; full of extortion and excess!” (^{<1023>}Matthew 23:23,25).

^{<3885>}**Zephaniah 3:5.** But, beside these “evening wolves in the midst of her,” there standeth Another “in the midst of her,” whom they knew not, and so, very near (The words in Hebrew correspond with each other, being from the same root, “draw near;” “in the midst of her.” ^{<3882>}Zephaniah 3:2,3,5) to them although they would not draw near to Him. But He was near, to behold all the iniquities which they did in the very city and place called by His Name and in His very presence; He was in her to protect, foster her with a father’s love, but she, presuming on His mercy, had cast it off. And so He was near to punish, not to deliver; as a Judge, not as a Saviour. Dionysius: “God is everywhere, Who says by Jeremiah, ‘I fill heaven and earth’ (^{<2024>}Jeremiah 23:24). But since, as Solomon attesteth, ‘The Lord is far from the wicked’ (^{<1059>}Proverbs 15:29), how is He said here to be in the midst of these most wicked men? Because the Lord is far from the wicked, as regards the presence of love and grace; still in His Essence He is everywhere, and in this way He is equally present to all.”

The Lord is in the midst thereof; He will not do iniquity Dionysius: “Since He is the primal rule and measure of all righteousness; therefore from the very fact that He doeth anything, it is just, for He cannot do amiss, being essentially holy. Therefore He will give to every man what he deserves. Therefore we chant, ‘The Lord is upright, and there is no unrighteousness in Him’ (^{<3925>}Psalm 92:15).” justice and injustice, purity and impurity, cannot be together. God’s presence then must destroy the sinners, if not the sin. He was “in the midst of them,” to sanctify them, giving them His judgments as a pattern of theirs; “He will not do iniquity:” but if they heeded it not, the judgment would fall upon themselves. It were for God to become “such an one as themselves” (^{<4871>}Psalm 50:21), and to connive at wickedness, were He to spare at last the impenitent.

Every morning (Literally, in the morning, in the morning) one after the other, quickly, openly, daily, continually, bringing all secret things, all works of darkness, to light, as He said to David, “Thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun” (^{<1022>}2 Samuel 12:12). Doth He bring His judgments to light,” so that no sin should be hidden in the brightness of His Light, as He said by Hosea, “Thy judgments are a light which goeth forth.” Cyril: “Morning by morning, He shall execute His judgments, that is, in bright day and visibly, not restraining His anger, but bringing it forth in the midst, and making it conspicuous, and, as it were, setting in open vision what He had foreannounced.” Day by day God gives some warning of His judgments. By chastisements which are felt to be His on this side or on that or all around, He gives ensamples which speak to the sinner’s heart. “He faileth not.” As God said by Habakkuk, that His promises, although they seem to “linger,” were not “behind” (^{<3113>}Habakkuk 2:3) the real time, which lay in the Divine Mind, so, contrariwise, neither are His judgments. His hand is never missing at the appointed time. “But the unjust,” he, whose very being and character, “iniquity,” is the exact contrary to what he had said of the perfection of God, “Who doth not iniquity,” or, as Moses had taught them in his song, “all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (^{<4524>}Deuteronomy 32:4). “Knoweth no shame,” as God saith by Jeremiah, “Thou refusedst to be ashamed” (^{<2403>}Jeremiah 3:3). They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush” (^{<2465>}Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12). Even thus they would not be ashamed of their sins, “that they might be converted and God might heal them” (^{<2160>}Isaiah 6:10).

3816 Zephaniah 3:6. *I have cut off the nations* God appeals to His judgments on pagan nations, not on any particular nation, as far as we know; but to past history, whether of those, of whose destruction Israel itself had been the instrument, or others. The judgments upon the nations before them were set forth to them, when they were about to enter on their inheritance, as a warning to themselves. “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things, for in all these have the nations defiled themselves, which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants. And ye, ye shall keep My statutes and My judgements and shall not commit any of these abominations — And the land shall not spue you out when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations which were before you” (³⁸²⁴Leviticus 18:24,25,26,28, add ³⁸¹²Leviticus 20:23). The very possession then of the land was a warning to them; the ruins, which crowned so many of its hilltops (This will be brought out by the “Ordnance survey” of Palestine, when completed. Isaiah alludes to them, ²³⁷⁰Isaiah 17:9), were silent preachers to them; they lived among the memories of God’s visitations; if neglected, they were an earnest of future judgments on themselves. Yet God’s judgments are not at one time only. Sennacherib appealed to their own knowledge, “Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly. Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed?” (²³⁷¹Isaiah 37:11,13). Hezekiah owned it as a fact which he knew: “Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their land” (²³⁷⁸Isaiah 37:18). And God owns him as His instrument: “Now I have brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defended cities into ruinous heaps” (²³⁷⁵Isaiah 37:26): and, “I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down as the mire of the streets,” and says of him, “It is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few” (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 10:6,7, and the graphic picture ²³⁰³Isaiah 10:13,14). The king of Babylon too he describes as “the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms. that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof” (²³⁴⁶Isaiah 14:16,17). Habakkuk recently described the wide wasting by the Babylonians, and the helplessness of nations before him (³⁰¹⁴Habakkuk 1:14-16).

Their towers, corner towers (See the note at ³⁰¹⁶Zephaniah 1:16. Since also the subjects spoken of in this verse are places, the metaph. meaning of

“princes” that is, cornerstones, is not probable here), the most carefully fortified parts of their fortified cities, “are desolate; I made their streets waste.” The desolation is complete, within as well as without; ruin itself is hardly so desolate as the empty habitations and forsaken streets, once full of life, where

*“The echoes and the empty tread
Would sound like voices from the dead.”*

~~4187~~ **Zephaniah 3:7.** *I said, surely thou wilt fear Me* God speaks of things here, as they are in their own nature. “It could not but be,” that in the very presence of the Hand of God, destroying others but as yet sparing them, they must learn to fear Him; they must stand in awe of Him for His judgments on others; they must be in filial fear of Him for His loving longsuffering toward themselves. “Thou ‘wilt’ receive instruction,” corrected and taught through God’s correction of others and the lighter judgments on themselves, as Solomon says, “I looked, I set my heart: I saw, I received instruction” (~~1282~~ Proverbs 24:32). He saith, “receive,” making it man’s free act. God brings it near, commends it to him, exhorts, entreats, but leaves him the awful power to “receive” or to refuse. God speaks with a wonderful tenderness. “Surely thou ‘wilt’ stand in awe of Me; thou ‘wilt’ receive instruction; thou wilt now do what hitherto thou hast refused to do.” There was (so to speak) nothing else left for them, in sight of those judgments. He pleads their own interests. The lightning was ready to fall. The prophet had, in vision, seen the enemy within the city. Yet even now God lingers, as it were, “If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things which are for thy peace” (~~1992~~ Luke 19:42).

So their (her) *dwelling should not be cut off* His own holy land which He had given them. A Jew paraphrases (Jonah), “And He will not cut off their dwellings from the land of the house of My Shechinah” (God’s visible presence in glory). Judah, who was before addressed “thou,” is now spoken of in the third person, “her;” and this also had wonderful tenderness. It is as though God were musing over her and the blessed fruits of her return to Him; “it shall not be needed to correct her further.” “Howsoever I punished them:” literally, “all” (that is, ‘all’ the offences) “which I visited upon her,” as God saith of Himself, “‘visiting’ the ‘sins’ of the fathers ‘upon’ the children” (~~1216~~ Exodus 20:5; 34:7; ~~0148~~ Numbers 14:18), and this is mostly the meaning of the words^{f388} “visit upon.” Amid and notwithstanding all the offences which God had already chastised, He,

in His love and compassion, still longeth, not utterly to remove them from His presence, if they would but receive instruction “now;” but they would not. “How often,” our Lord says, “would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” (^{<4123>}Matthew 23:37). “But indeed,” “probably, Of a truth” (The adversative force, which Gesenius (Thes, p. 670) and Ewald (Lehrb. n. 105. d. p. 274. ed. 8) think to belong to a later style, lies (as so often in other Hebrews particles) in the tacit contrast of the sentences. Gesenius’ instances of this “later usage” are ^{<5812>}Psalm 31:23; (David’s) 66:19; 82:7; ^{<4318>}Job 32:8; ^{<2304>}Isaiah 49:4; 53:4; ^{<2431>}Jeremiah 3:20; and this place) (it is a word strongly affirming what follows) “they rose early, they corrupted all their doings;” God gave them His warnings, awaited the result; they lost no time, they began with morning light; they hastened to rise, burdened^{f389} themselves, made sure of having the whole day before them, to — seek God as He had sent His prophets, “rising early and sending them?” (^{<2473>}Jeremiah 7:13,25; 11:7; 26:5; 29:19). No, nor even simply to do ill, but of set purpose. to do, not this or that corruptly, but “to corrupt all their doings.” Jerome: “They with diligence and eagerness rose early, that, with the same haste wherewith they ought to have returned to Me, they might shew forth in deed what they had conceived amiss in their mind.” There are as many aggravations of their sin as there are words. The four Hebrew words bespeak eagerness, willfulness, completeness enormity, in sin. They “rose early,” themselves deliberately “corrupted,” of their own mind made offensive, “all” their “doings,” not slight acts, but “deeds,” great works done with a high hand.^{f390}

^{<4118>}**Zephaniah 3:8.** *Therefore wait ye upon* (for) *Me* God so willeth not to punish, but that all should lay hold of His mercy, that He doth not here even name punishment. Judah had slighted His mercies; He was ready to forgive all they had sinned, if they would “now” receive instruction; they in return set themselves to corrupt “all” their doings. They had wholly forsaken Him. “Therefore” — we should have expected, as elsewhere, “Therefore I will visit all your iniquities upon you.” But not so. The chastisement is all veiled; the prophet points only to the mercy beyond. “Therefore wait ye for Me.” All the interval of chastisement is summed up in these words; that is, since neither My mercies toward you, nor My chastisement of others, lead you to obey Me, “therefore” the time shall be, when My Providence shall not seem to be over you, nor My presence among you (see ^{<4118>}Hosea 3:3-5); but then, “wait ye for Me”^{f391} earnestly,

intensely, perseveringly, “until the day, that I rise up to the prey.” “The day” is probably in the first instance, the deliverance from Babylon. But the words seem to be purposely enlarged, that they may embrace other judgments of God also. For the words to “gather the nations, assemble the kingdoms,” describe some array of nations against God and His people; gathering themselves for their own end at that time, but, in His purpose, gathering themselves for their own destruction, rather than the mere tranquil reunion of those of different nations in the city of Babylon, when the Medes and Persians came against them. Nor again are they altogether fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, or any other event until now. For although then a vast number of the dispersed Jews were collected together, and were at that time “broken off” (^{<611>}Romans 11:20) and out of covenant with God, they could hardly be called “nations,” (which are here and before (Zephaniah 5:6) spoken of in contrast with Judah), much less “kingdoms.” In its fullest sense the prophecy seems to belong to the same events in the last struggle of Anti-Christ, as at the close of Joel (^{<211>}Joel 3:2,9-16) and Zechariah (Zechariah 14). With this agrees the largeness of the destruction; “to pour out upon them,” in full measure, emptying out so as to overwhelm them, “Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy” (see ^{<1621>}Psalms 69:24; 79:6; ^{<211>}Jeremiah 6:11; 10:25; 14:16; ^{<213>}Ezekiel 21:31; ^{<661>}Revelation 16:1). The outpouring of ALL God’s wrath, the devouring of the whole earth, in the fullest sense of the words, belongs to the end of the world, when He shall say to the wicked, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” In lesser degrees, and less fully, the substance of the prophecy has again and again been fulfilled to the Jewish Church before Christ, at Babylon and under the Maccabees; and to the Christian, as when the Muslims hemmed in Christendom on all sides, and the waves of their conquests on the east and west threatened to meet, overwhelming Christendom. The Church, having sinned, had to “wait” for a while “for God” who by His Providence withdrew Himself, yet at last delivered it.

And since the whole history of the Church lies wrapt up in the Person of the Redeemer, “the day that I rise up to the prey,” is especially the Day in which the foundation of His Church was laid, or that in which it shall be completed; the Day whereon He rose again, as the first-fruits, or that Day in which He shall “stand again on the earth” (^{<1825>}Job 19:25. It is the same word), to judge it; “so coming even as He went up into heaven” (^{<4111>}Acts 1:11). Then, “the prey” must be, what God vouchsafes to account as His

gain, “the prey” which is “taken from the mighty” (^{<2342>}Isaiah 49:24,25), and “the lawful captivity, the prey of the terrible one,” which shall be delivered; even that spoil which the Father bestowed on Him “Who made His soul an offering for sin” (^{<2510>}Isaiah 53:10,12), the goods of the strong man (^{<4123>}Matthew 12:29) whom He bound, and spoiled us, His lawful goods and captives, since we had “sold” (^{<4174>}Romans 7:14, coll; ^{<2301>}Isaiah 50:1; 52:3) ourselves “under sin” to him. Cyril: “Christ lived again having spoiled hell, because “it was not possible” (as it is written) “that He,” being by nature Life, “should be holden of death” (^{<4124>}Acts 2:24).

Here, where spoken of with relation to the Church, “the jealousy” of Almighty God is that love for His people (see the note at ^{<3400>}Nahum 1:2), which will not endure their ill-treatment by those who (as all anti-Christian power does) make themselves His rivals in the government of the world.

^{<3619>}**Zephaniah 3:9.** *For then* In the order of God’s mercies. The deliverance from Babylon was the forerunner of that of the Gospel, which was its object. The spread of the Gospel then is spoken of in the connection of God’s Providence and plan, and time is overlooked. Its blessings are spoken of, as “then” given when the earnest was given, and the people, from whom according to the flesh Christ was to be born, were placed anew in the land where He was to be born. Lap.: “The prophet springs, as is his wont, to Christ and the time of the new law.” And in Christ, the End of the Law, the prophet ends.

I will turn Contrary to what they had before, “to the people,” literally, “peoples,” the nations of the earth, “a pure language,” literally, “a purified lip.” It is a real conversion, as was said of Saul at the beginning (^{<1903>}1 Samuel 10:9); “God” (literally) “turned to him another heart.” Before the dispersion of Babel the world was³⁹² “of one lip,” but that, impure, for it was in rebellion against God. Now it shall be again of “one lip;” and that, “purified.” The purity is of faith and of life, “that they way call upon the Name of the Lord,” not as heretofore on idols, but that every tongue should confess the one true God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, in Whose Name they are baptized. This is purity of faith. To “call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus” (^{<4216>}Acts 22:16; ^{<5103>}Romans 10:13) is the very title of Christian worship; “all that called upon the Name” of Jesus, the very title of Christians (^{<4194>}Acts 9:14,21; ^{<4102>}1 Corinthians 1:2). “To serve Him with one consent,” literally, “with one shoulder,” evenly, steadfastly, “not unequally yoked,” but all with united strength, bearing Christ’s “easy yoke”

and “one another’s burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ.” This is purity of life. The fruit of the lips is the “sacrifice of praise” (^{<813>}Hebrews 13:15). God gave back one pure language, when, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the Author of purity, came down in fiery tongues upon the Apostles, teaching them and guiding them “into the whole truth” (^{<813>}John 16:13), and to “speak to every one in his own tongue, wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God” (^{<408>}Acts 2:8,11). Thenceforth there was to be a higher unity than that of outward language. For speech is not the outer sound, but the thoughts which it conveys and embodies. The inward thought is the soul of the words. The outward confusion of Babel was to hinder oneness in evil and a worse confusion. At Pentecost, the unity restored was oneness of soul and heart, wrought by One Spirit, whose gift is the one Faith and the one Hope of our calling, in the One Lord, in whom we are one, grafted into the one body, by our baptism (^{<408>}Ephesians 4:3-6). The Church, then created, is the One Holy Universal Church diffused throughout all the world, everywhere with one rule of Faith, “the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints,” confessing one God, the Trinity in Unity, and serving Him in the one law of the Gospel with one consent. Christians, as Christians, speak the same language of Faith, and from all quarters of the world, one language of praise goes up to the One God and Father of all. (Augustine, in ^{<950>}Psalm 54:6):

“God divided the tongues at Babel, lest, understanding one another, they should form a destructive unity. Through proud men tongues were divided; through humble Apostles tongues were gathered in one. The spirit of pride dispersed tongues; the Holy Spirit gathered tongues in one. For when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they spake with the tongues of all, were understood by all; the dispersed tongues were gathered into one. So then, if they are yet angry and Gentiles, it is better for them to have their tongues divided. If they wish for one tongue, let them come to the Church, for in diversity of the tongues of the flesh, there is one tongue in the Faith of the heart.” In whatever degree the oneness is impaired within the Church, while there is yet one faith of the creeds, He alone can restore it and ‘turn to her a purified language,’ who first gave it to those who waited for Him. Both praise and service are perfected above, where the Blessed, with one loud voice, ‘shall cry, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb; blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor

and power and might be unto our God forever and ever’ (^{<670>}Revelation 7:10,12). And they who ‘have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb,’ shall be ‘before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple’ (^{<674>}Revelation 7:14,15).”

^{<680>}**Zephaniah 3:10.** *From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia* (See ^{<280>}Isaiah 18:1.) The farthest southern people, with whom the Jews had contact, stand as the type of the whole world beyond. The utmost bound of the known inhabited land should not be the bound of the Gospel. The conversion of Abyssinia is one, but the narrowest fulfillment of the prophecy. The whole new world, though not in the mind of the prophet, was in the mind of Him who spake by the prophet.

My suppliants He names them as what they shall be when they shall come to Him. They shall come, as needy, to the Fountain of all good, asking for mercy of the unfailing Source of all mercy. He describes the very character of all who come to God through Christ. “The daughter of My dispersed.” God is, in the way of Providence, the Father of all, although, by sin, alienated from Him; from where Paul says, “we are the offspring of God” (^{<417>}Acts 17:28). They were “dispersed,” severed from the oneness in Him and from His house and family; yet still, looking on them as already belonging to Him, He calls them, “My dispersed,” as by Caiaphas, being high priest, He prophesied that “Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (^{<615>}John 11:51,52).

Shall bring Mine offering^{f393} The offering is the same as that which Malachi prophesies shall continue under the New Testament, which offering was to be offered to the Name of God, not in Jerusalem, but (^{<301>}Malachi 1:11) “in every place from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.” The dark skin of the Ethiopian is the image of ingrained sin, which man could not efface or change (^{<243>}Jeremiah 13:23): their conversion then declares how those steeped in sin shall be cleansed from all their darkness of mind, and washed white from their sins in Baptism and beautified by the grace of God. Cyril:

“The word of prophecy endeth in truth. For not only through the Roman empire is the Gospel preached, but it circles round the barbarous nations. And there are Churches everywhere, shepherds and teachers, guides and instructors in mysteries, and sacred altars,

and the Lamb is invisibly sacrificed by holy priests among Indians too and Ethiopians. And this was said plainly by another prophet also, ‘For I am a great King, saith the Lord, and My Name is great among the pagan, and in every place incense is offered to My Name and a pure sacrifice’ (^{<3011>}Malachi 1:11).”

^{<3811>}**Zephaniah 3:11.** *In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings* Because God, forgiving them, will blot them out and no more remember them. This was first fulfilled in the Gospel. Cyril:

“No one can doubt that when Christ came in the flesh, there was an amnesty and remission to all who believed. ‘For we are justified not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His great mercy.’ But we have been released from shame. For ‘He’ hath restored us to freedom of access to God, Who for our sakes arose from the dead, and for us ascended to heaven in the presence of the Father. ‘For Christ, our Forerunner, hath ascended for us now to appear in the presence of God.’ So then He took away the guilt of all and freed believers from failures and shame.” Peter, even in heaven, must remember his denial of our Lord, yet not so as to be ashamed or pained anymore, since the exceeding love of God will remove all shame or pain. Rup.: “Mighty promise, mighty consolation. Now, before that Day comes, the Day of My Resurrection, thou wilt be ashamed and not without reason, since thou ownest by a true confession, ‘all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags’ (^{<2345>}Isaiah 64:6). But at that Day it will not be so, especially when that shall be which I promise thee in the prophets and the Psalms, ‘There shall be a Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness’ (^{<3810>}Zechariah 13:1); whence David also, exulting in good hope of the Holy Spirit, saith, ‘Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow’ (^{<1507>}Psalms 51:7). For though he elsewhere saith, ‘they looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed’ (^{<1945>}Psalms 34:5), yet in this mortal life, when the Day of My Resurrection doth not fully shine upon thee, thou art after some sort ashamed; as it is written, ‘What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?’ (^{<412>}Romans 6:21), but that shame will bring glory, and, when that glory cometh in its place, will wholly pass away. But when the fullness of that day shall come, the fullness of My Resurrection, when the members shall rise, as the Head hath risen, will the memory of past foulness bring

any confusion? Yea the very memory of the miseries will be the richest subject of singing, according to that, ‘My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord’ (^{<1801>}Psalm 89:1).”

For how shall the redeemed forget the mercies of their redemption, or yet how feel a painful shame even of the very miseries, out of which they were redeemed by the fullness of the overstreaming Love of God?

For then will I take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride (Those of thee who exult in pride.) All confusion shall (cease, because all pride shall cease, the parent of sin and confusion. The very gift of God becomes to the carnal a source of pride. Pride was to the Jew also the great hindrance to the reception of the Gospel. He made his “boast of the law,” yea, in God Himself, that he “knew His will,” and was a “guide of others” (^{<8127>}Romans 2:17,18-20,23), and so was the more indignant, that the pagan was made equal to him, and that he too was called to repentance and faith in Christ. So, “going about to establish his own righteousness, he did not submit himself to the righteousness of God,” but shut himself out from the faith and grace and salvation of Christ, and rejected Himself. So (Rup.), “thy pride” may be the pride in being the people of God, and having Abraham for their father. “And thou shalt no more be haughty in My holy mountain,” “but thou shalt stand in the great and everlasting abiding-place of humility, knowing perfectly, that thou now ‘knowest in part’ only, and confessest truly that no one ever could or can by his own works be justified in the sight of God. ‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ (^{<8123>}Romans 3:23).” Pride which is ever offensive to God, is yet more hideous in a holy place or a holy office, “in” Mount Sion where the temple was or in the Christian priesthood.

^{<812>}**Zephaniah 3:12.** *I will also leave* (Over, as a remnant, it is still the same heavy prophecy, that a remnant only ‘shall be saved’) (^{<8127>}Romans 9:27, see above on ^{<8122>}Micah 2:12, p. 36) “an afflicted and poor people.” priests, (except that ‘great company who were obedient to the faith’) (^{<4117>}Acts 6:7), scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, Sadducees were taken away; and there remained “the people of the land” (the uneducated, “this people that knoweth not the law” (^{<8174>}John 7:49), “one in whom there are moral not intellectual excellences.” Rambam in Buxt. Lex. Talm. col. 1626), the “unlearned and ignorant” (^{<4113>}Acts 4:13), “the weak things of the world and the things despised” (^{<4127>}1 Corinthians 1:27,28) who bore the very title of their Master, “the poor and needy; poor in Spirit” (^{<1911>}Psalm 41:1); poor

also in outward things, since “they who had lands, sold them and they had all things common” (^{<424>}Acts 2:44,45; 4:32,35). They were afflicted above measure outwardly in the (^{<400>}Acts 8:1; 9:2,13,14; 12:1,2; 13:50; 14:5,22; 22; etc. ^{<517>}Romans 8:17,35,36; 12:14; ^{<409>}1 Corinthians 9:19; ^{<4008>}2 Corinthians 1:8,9; 12:10; ^{<5004>}2 Thessalonians 1:4; ^{<5311>}2 Timothy 3:11,12; ^{<5002>}Hebrews 10:32-34; ^{<5016>}James 2:6,7; ^{<4006>}1 Peter 1:6,7; 4:13; ^{<4000>}Revelation 1:9; 6:9 etc.) persecutions, “reproaches, spoiling of” their “goods,” stripes, deaths, which they endured for Christ’s sake. They knew too their own poverty, Rup: “knowing themselves to be sinners, and that they were justified only by faith in Jesus Christ.” When the rest were cast out “of the midst of her,” these should be left “in the midst of her” (the words stand in contrast with one another) in the bosom of the Church. “And they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” “As they looked to be justified only in the Name of Christ,” and (Dionysius) “trusted in the grace and power of God alone, not in any power or wisdom or eloquence or riches of this world, they converted the world to a faith above nature.” Cyril:

“Conformed in this too to Christ. Who for our sakes became poor and almost neglected both His divine glory and the supereminence of His nature, to subject Himself to the condition of a servant. So then those instructed in His laws after His example, think humbly of themselves, They became most exceedingly loved of God, and chiefly the divine disciples, who were set as lights of the world.”

^{<413>}**Zephaniah 3:13.** *The remnant of Israel* The same poor people, the “true Israel” of whom God said, “I leave over” (the word is the same) “a poor people,” few, compared with the rest who were blinded; of whom the Lord said, “I know whom I have chosen” (^{<4138>}John 13:18). These “shall not do iniquity nor speak lies.” Cyril: “This is a spiritual adorning, a most beautiful coronet of glorious virtues. For where meekness and humility are and the desire of righteousness, and the tongue unlearns vain words and sinful speech, and is the instrument of strict truth, there dawns a bright and most perfect virtue. And this beseems those who are in Christ. For the beauty of piety is not seen in the Law, but gleams forth in the power of Evangelic teachings.”

Our Lord said of Nathanael, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (^{<4047>}John 1:47), and to the Apostles, “I send you forth as sheep among wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves”

(~~4006~~ Matthew 10:16); and of the first Christians it is said, “they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house did eat their merit with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people” (~~4046~~ Acts 2:46,47). This is the character of Christians, as such, and it was at first fulfilled; “whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin” (~~6180~~ 1 John 3:9); “whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (~~6188~~ 1 John 5:18). An Apologist, at the close of the second century, could appeal to the Roman Emperor, ^{f395} that no Christian was found among their criminals, “unless it be only as a Christian, or, if he be anything else, he is immediately no longer a Christian. We alone then are innocent! What wonder if this be so, of necessity? And truly of necessity it is so. Taught innocence by God, we both know it perfectly, as being revealed by a perfect Master; and we keep it faithfully, as being committed to us by an Observer, Who may not be despised.” (Id. ad Scap. n. 2, p, 145. Oxford Translation):

“Being so vast a multitude of men, almost the greater portion of every state, we live silently and modestly, known perhaps more as individuals than as a body, and to be known by no other sign than the reformation of our former sins.”

Now in the Church, which “our earth dimm’d eyes behold,” we can but say, as in regard to the cessation of war (See the notes on ~~3008~~ Micah 4:3) under the Gospel, that God’s promises are sure on His part, that still (~~4004~~ Galatians 5:24. See Dr. Pusey’s Sermon, “The Gospel, the power of God.” Lenten Sermons, pp. 300-321) “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,” that the Gospel is “a power of God unto salvation” (~~4016~~ Romans 1:16), that “the preaching of the Cross is, unto us which are saved, the power of God” (~~4008~~ 1 Corinthians 1:18); “unto them that are called, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (~~4022~~ 1 Corinthians 1:24); that those who will, “are kept by God through faith unto salvation” (~~4005~~ 1 Peter 1:5); but that now too “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (~~4006~~ Romans 9:6), and that “the faithlessness of man does not make the faith of God of none effect” (~~4008~~ Romans 3:3). (Dr. Pearson on the Creed, Art. ix.):

“The Church of God is universally holy in respect of all, by institutions and administrations of sanctity; the same Church is really holy in this world, in relation to all godly persons contained

in it, by a real infused sanctity; the same is farther yet at the same time perfectly holy in reference to the saints departed and admitted to the presence of God; and the same Church shall hereafter be most completely holy in the world to come, when all the members, actually belonging to it, shall be at once perfected in holiness and completed in happiness.”

Most fully shall this be fulfilled in the Resurrection. Rup.:

“O blessed day of the Resurrection, in whose fullness no one will sin in word or deed! O great and blessed reward to every soul, which, although it hath now “done iniquity” and “spoken falsehood,” yet willeth not to do it further! Great and blessed reward, that he shall now receive such. immovableness, as no longer to be able to do iniquity or speak falsehood, since the blessed soul, through the Spirit of everlasting love inseparably united with God its Creator, shall now no more be capable of an evil will!”

For they shall feed On the hidden manna, Dionysius: “nourished most delicately by the Holy Spirit with inward delights, and spiritual food, the bread of life.” In the things of the body too was “distribution made unto every man according as he had need” (~~406S~~ Acts 4:35). “And they shall lie down” in the green pastures where He foldeth them; “and none shall make them afraid” (~~406S~~ 1 Peter 1:5), “for they were ready to suffer and to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus” (~~421S~~ Acts 21:13). “They departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name” (~~444S~~ Acts 5:41). Before the Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, how great was the fearfulness, unsteadfastness, weakness of the disciples; how great, after the infusion of the Holy Spirit, was their constancy and imperturbableness, it is delightsome to estimate in their Acts,” when they “bare His Name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel” (~~440S~~ Acts 9:15), and he who had been afraid of a little maid, said to the high priest, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (~~445S~~ Acts 5:29). Cyril:

“When Christ the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for His sheep, shone upon us, we are fed in gardens and pastured among lilies, and lie down in folds; for we are folded in Churches and holy shrines, no one scaring or spoiling us, no wolf assailing nor lion trampling on us, no robber breaking through, no one invading us, to

steal and kill and destroy; but we abide in safety and participation of every good, being in charge of Christ the Saviour of all.”

~~3184~~ **Zephaniah 3:14.** *Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem* Very remarkable throughout all these verses is the use of the sacred number three, secretly conveying to the thoughtful soul the thought of Him, Father Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy and Undivided Trinity by whose operation these things shall be. Threefold is the description of their being freed from sins:

- (1) they shall “not do iniquity,”
- (2) “nor speak lies,”
- (3) “neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.”

Threefold their blessedness; They shall:

- (1) “feed,”
- (2) “lie down,”
- (3) “none make them afraid.”

Threefold the exhortation to joy here. (Rup.): “Sing to God the Father; ‘shout’ to God the Son; ‘be glad and rejoice’ in God the Holy Spirit, which Holy Trinity is One God, from whom thou hast received it that thou art:

- (1) ‘the daughter of Zion’
- (2) ‘Israel’
- (3) ‘the daughter of Jerusalem’

‘The daughter of Zion’ by faith, ‘Israel’ by hope, ‘Jerusalem’ by charity.” And this hidden teaching of that holy mystery is continued; “The Lord,” God the Father, “hath taken away thy judgments; He God” the Son, “hath cast out (cleared quite away) thine enemy; the king of Israel, the Lord,” the Holy Spirit, “is in the midst of thee!” (~~3185~~ Zephaniah 3:15). The promise is threefold:

- (1) “thou shalt not see evil anymore”
- (2) “fear thou not”
- (3) “let not thine hands be slack”

The love of God is threefold:

- (1) “He will rejoice over thee with joy”
- (2) “He will rest in His love”
- (3) “He will joy over thee with singing”

Again the words in these four verses are so framed as to be “ful”-filled in the end. All in this life are but shadows of that fullness. First, whether the Church or the faithful soul, she is summoned by all her names, “daughter of Zion” (“the thirsty” athirst for God) “Israel” (“Prince with God”) “Jerusalem” (“City of Peace”). By all she is called to the fullest joy in God with every expression and every feeling. “Sing;” it is the inarticulate, thrilling, trembling burst of joy; “shout;” again the inarticulate yet louder swell of joy, a trumpet-blast; and then too, deep within, “be glad,” the calm even joy of the inward soul; “exult,” the triumph of the soul which cannot contain itself for joy; and this, “with the whole heart,” no corner of it not pervaded with joy. The ground of this is the complete removal of every evil, and the full presence of God.

<4815> Zephaniah 3:15. *The Lord hath taken away thy judgments* Her own, because brought upon her by her sins. But when God takes away the chastisements in mercy, He removes and forgives the sin too. Else, to remove “the judgments” only, would be to abandon the sinner. “He hath cast out,” literally, “cleared quite away,”^{f395} as a man clears away all hindrances, all which stands in the way, so that there should be none whatever left — “thine enemy;” the one enemy, from whom every hindrance to our salvation comes, as He saith, “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. The King of Israel, even the Lord” (<4823> John 12:31), Christ the Lord, “is in the midst of thee,” of whom it is said, “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (<4075> Revelation 7:15), and who Himself saith, “Lo I am with you always unto the end of the world” (<4820> Matthew 28:20). “Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of you” (<4080> Matthew 18:20). He who had removed “from the midst of her” the proud, Who had left “in the midst of her” those with whom He dwelleth, shall Himself dwell “in the midst of her” in mercy, as He had before in judgment (<4081> Matthew 18:11,12,15,5). He cleanseth the soul for His indwelling, and so dwelleth in the mansion which He had prepared for Himself. “Thou shalt not see evil anymore.” For even the remains of evil, while we are yet in the flesh, are overruled, and

“work together to good to those who love God” (^{<488>}Romans 8:28). They cannot separate between the soul and Christ. Rather, He is nearer to her in them. We are bidden to “count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations” (^{<300>}James 1:2), for all sorrows are but medicine from a father’s hand. (Exhort. in Visit. of the sick):

“And truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ, and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death and dwell with Him in everlasting life.”

So in the Revelation, it is first said that God should dwell with His people, and then that all pain shall cease. “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and be their God. And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain, for the former things are passed away” (^{<620>}Revelation 21:3,4). Cyril:

“In the inmost meaning of the words, he could not but bid her rejoice and be exceeding glad and rejoice with her whole heart, her sins being done away through Christ. For the holy and spiritual Zion, the Church, the multitude of believers, is justified in Christ alone, and we are saved by Him and from Him, escaping the harms of our invisible enemies, and having in the midst of us the King and God of all, Who appeared in our likeness, the Word from God the Father, through whom we see not evil, that is, are freed from all who could do us evil. For He is the worker of our acceptableness, our peace, our wall, the bestower of incorruption, the dispenser of crowns, Who lighteneth the assaults of devils, Who giveth us to ‘tread on serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy’ (^{<200>}Luke 10:19) — through whom we are in good hope of immortality and life, adoption and glory, through whom we shall not see evil anymore.”

^{<316>}**Zephaniah 3:16.** *In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not* For “perfect love casteth out fear” (^{<408>}John 4:18); from where he saith, “Fear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (^{<220>}Luke 12:32). Who then and what should the Church or the faithful soul fear, since “mightier is He that is in her, than he that is in the world? And to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack,” through faint-heartedness (see ^{<822>}Hebrews 12:12), but work with all thy might; be ready

to do or bear anything; since Christ worketh with, in, by thee, and “in due time we shall reap, if we faint not” (^{<4819>}Galatians 6:9).

^{<4817>}**Zephaniah 3:17.** *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save* What can He then not do for thee, since He is Almighty? What will He not do for thee, since “He will save?” whom then should we fear? “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (^{<4831>}Romans 8:31). But then was He especially “in the midst of” us, when God “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth” (^{<4814>}John 1:14). Thenceforth He ever is in the midst of His own. He with the Father and the Holy Spirit “come unto them and make Their abode with them” (^{<4823>}John 14:23), so that they are “the temple of God. He will save,” as He saith, “My Father is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are One” (^{<4819>}John 10:29,30). Of the same time of the Christ, Isaiah saith almost in the same words; “Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, Say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come, He will come and save you” (^{<2388>}Isaiah 35:3,4); and of the Holy Trinity, “He will save us” (^{<2382>}Isaiah 33:22).

He will rejoice, over thee with joy Love, joy, peace in man are shadows of that which is in God, by whom they are created in man. Only in God they exist undivided, uncreated. Hence, God speaks after the manner of men, of that which truly is in God. God joyeth “with an uncreated joy” over the works of His Hands or the objects of His Love, as man joyeth over the object of “his” love. So Isaiah saith, “As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (^{<2315>}Isaiah 62:5). As with uncreated love the Father resteth in good pleasure in His well-beloved Son, so “God is well-pleased with the sacrifices of loving deeds” (^{<3816>}Hebrews 13:16). and, “the Lord delighteth in thee” (^{<2314>}Isaiah 62:4); and, “I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people” (^{<2319>}Isaiah 65:19); and, “the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good” (^{<4810>}Deuteronomy 30:9). And so in a two-fold way God meeteth the longing of the heart of man. The soul, until it hath found God, is evermore seeking some love to fill it, and can find none, since the love of God Alone can content it. Then too it longeth to be loved, even as it loveth. God tells it, that every feeling and expression of human love may be found in Him, whom if any love, he only “loveth Him, because He first loved us” (^{<4819>}1 John 4:19). Every inward and outward expression or token of love are heaped together, to express

the love of Him who broodeth and as it were yearneth “over” (it is twice repeated) His own whom He loveth. Then too He loveth thee as He biddeth thee to love Him; and since the love of man cannot be like the love of the Infinite God, He here pictures His own love in the words of man’s love, to convey to his soul the oneness wherewith love unites her unto God. He here echoes in a manner the joy of the Church, to which He had called her (~~1~~ John 4:14), in words the self-same or meaning the same. We have “joy” here for “joy” there; “singing” or the unuttered unutterable jubilee of the heart, which cannot utter in words its joy and love, and joys and loves the more in its inmost depths because it cannot utter it. A shadow of the unutterable, because Infinite Love of God, and this repeated thrice; as being the eternal love of the Everblessed Trinity. This love and joy the prophet speaks of, as an exuberant joy, one which boundeth within the inmost self, and again is wholly “silent in His love,” as the deepest, tenderest, most yearning love broods over the object of its love, yet is held still in silence by the very depth of its love; and then, again, breaks forth in outward motion, and leaps for joy, and uttereth what it cannot form in words, for truly the love of God in its unspeakable love and joy is past belief, past utterance, past thought. Rup.: “Truly that joy wherewith ‘He will be silent in His love,’ that exultation wherewith ‘He will joy over thee with singing, ‘Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man’ (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 2:9).” The Hebrew word also contains the meaning, “He in His love shall make no mention of past sins, He shall not bring them up against thee, shall not upbraid thee, yea, shall not remember them” (~~2~~ Jeremiah 31:34; 33:8; ~~3~~ Micah 7:18). It also may express the still, unvarying love of the Unchangeable God. And again trow the very silence of God, when He seemeth not to hear, as He did not seem to hear Paul, is a very fruit of His love. Yet that entire forgiveness of sins, and that seeming absence are but ways of showing His love. Hence, God speaks of His very love itself, “He will be silent in His love,” as, before and after, “He will rejoice, He will joy over thee.”

In the next few verses (~~4~~ Zephaniah 3:18-21) still continuing the number “three,” the prophecy closes with the final reversal of all which, in this imperfect state of things, seems turned upside down, when those who now mourn shall be comforted, they who now bear reproach and shame shall have glory, and those who now afflict the people of God shall be undone.

~~4~~ **Zephaniah 3:18.** *I will gather them that are sorrowful* for the solemn assembly, in which they were to “rejoice” (~~5~~ Leviticus 23:40;

<5122>Deuteronomy 12:12,18; 16:11; 27:7) before God and which in their captivity God made to cease. “They were of thee” (<2304>Lamentations 1:4; 2:6), the true Israel who were “grieved for the affliction of Joseph; to whom the reproach of it was a burden” (<3086>Amos 6:6) (rather (As in <4958>Psalm 15:3, <2538>Isaiah 53:3), ‘on whom reproach was laid’): for this “reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,” and such shall inherit the blessing, “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and east out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake; rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold your reward is great in heaven” (<4172>Luke 6:22,23).

<3689>**Zephaniah 3:19.** *Behold, at that time I will undo* (Literally, I deal with (as <8129>Ruth 2:19, in a good sense; <3072>Ezekiel 7:27; 17:17; 23:25). While God punisheth not, He seemeth to sit still (<2384>Isaiah 18:4), be silent (<3013>Habakkuk 1:13), asleep (<3423>Psalm 44:23). Then He shall act, He shall “deal” according to their deserts with “all,” evil men or devils, “that afflict thee,” His Church. The prophecy looked for a larger fulfillment than the destruction of Jerusalem, since the Romans who, in God’s Hands, avenged the blood of His saints, themselves were among those who “afflicted her.” “And will save her,” the flock or sheep “that halteth” (see <3306>Micah 4:6,7), Dionysius: “imperfect in virtue and with trembling faith,” “and gather,” like a good and tender shepherd, “her that was driven out” (see <2401>Isaiah 40:11); scattered and dispersed through persecutions. All infirmities within shall be healed; all troubles without, removed.

And I will get them praise and fame (Literally, I will make them a praise and a name) “in every land where they have been put to shame.” (The article is inserted in a way very unusual and probably emphatic. Without it the words would mean, as in the English Version “in every land of their shame”). Throughout the whole world have they been “the offscourings of all things” (<4013>1 Corinthians 4:13); throughout the whole world should their praise be, as it is said, “Thou shalt make them princes in all lands” (<1956>Psalm 45:16). One of themselves saith, “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of this world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (<4013>1 Corinthians 1:26-28). Rup.:

“These He maketh a praise and a name there, where they were without name and dispraised, confounding by them and bringing to nought those wise and strong and mighty, in whose sight they were contemptible.”

<418>Zephaniah 3:20. *At that time will I bring you in* that is, into the one fold, the one Church, the one “Household of God, even in the time that I gather you.” “That time” is the whole time of the Gospel; the one “day of salvation,” in which all who shall ever be gathered, shall be brought into the new Jerusalem. These words were fulfilled, when, at our Lord’s first Coming, the remnant, the true Israel, those “ordained to eternal life” were brought in. It shall be fulfilled again, when “the fullness of the Gentiles shall be “come in,” and so all Israel shall be saved” (<412>Romans 11:25,26). It shall most perfectly be fulfilled at the end, when there shall be no going out of those once “brought” in, and those who have gathered others into the Church, shall be “a name and a praise among all people of the earth,” those whom God hath “redeemed out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (<419>Revelation 5:9), shining like stars forever and ever.

When I turn back your captivity Rup.: “That conversion, then begun, now perfected, when the dead shall rise and they shall be placed on the right hand, soon to receive the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. O mighty spectacle of the reversed captivity of those once captives; mighty wonder at their present blessedness, as they review the misery of their past captivity!” “Before your eyes,” so that we shall see what we now believe and hope for, the end of all our sufferings, chastisements, losses, achings of the heart, the fullness of our Redemption. That which our eyes have looked for, “our eyes shall behold and not another,” the everliving God as HE IS, face to Face; “saith the Lord,” Who is the Truth Itself, all Whose words will be fulfilled. “heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away” (<413>Mark 13:31), saith He who is “God blessed forever.” And so the prophet closes in the thought of Him, Whose Name is I AM, the Unchangeable, the everlasting Rest and Center of those who, having been once captives and halting and scattered among the vanities of the world, turn to Him, to whom be glory and thanksgiving forever and ever. Amen.

THE MOABITE STONE

I MESHU, son of Chemosh-gad, king of Moab the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father; and I made

this shrine to Chemosh in Korchoh, a shr(ine of deli)verance, because he saved me from all and because he let me look upon all who hate me, Om(r)i king of Israel; and he afflicted Moab many days, for Chemosh was wroth with his la(n)d; and his son succeeded him, and he too said, I will afflict Moab. In my days said (Chemosh (Schlottman's conjecture. Likely conjectures I have put in (...); mere guess-work I have omitted)), and I will look upon him and upon his house, and Israel perisheth with an everlasting destruction. And Omri took possession of the land of Moh-deba and there dwelt in it (Schlottman's conjecture. Likely conjectures I have put in (...); mere guess-work I have omitted) Israel in his days and in) the days of his son, forty years; (and looked) on it Chemosh in my days, and I built Baal-Meon and I made in it the ditch(?) and I (built) Kiriathan. And the men of Gad dwelt in the land of (Atar)oth from time immemorial, and the king of Israel built for him A(ta)roth and I warred against the city; and I took it and I killed all the mi(ghty men) of the city, for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I took captive thence the (...) and (dr)agged it (or them) before Chemosh in Kiriath and I made to dwell in it the men of Siran, and the men of Macharath. And Chemosh said to me, Go take Nebo against Israel (and I) went by night and I fought against it from the break of the morning to mid-day and I took it, and I slew the whole of it, seven thousand; (...) the honorable women (and mai)dens, for to Ashtar Chemosh (I) dedicated (them) and I took thence (ves)sels of Yhvh and I dragged them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel buil(t) Yahats, and dwelt in it when he warred with me; and Chemosh drove him from (my) f(ace and) I took of Moab 200 men, all its chiefs and I took them against Yahats and took it to add to Dibon. I built Korchoh the wall of the forest, and the wall of Ophel and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I built the king's house, and I made prisons for the gui(lt)y in the mi(dst) of the city; and there was no cistern within the city, in Korchoh, and I said to all the people, make yourselves every man a cistern in his house, and I cut the cutting for Korchoh by m(en) of Israel. I built (A)roer and I made the high road (literally, "the way cast up" cannot possibly be a way over the river) at the Arnon. I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed. I built Bezer, for (it was) forsa(ken) me(n) of Dibon fifty, for all Dibon was obedience, and I reig(ned) from Bikran which I added to the land and I buil(t) — and Beth Diblathan and Beth-Baal-Meon and I took there the — of the land and Horonan dwelt in it — (and) Chemosh said to me, Go fight against Horonan and I it — Chemosh in my days and on (I) made.

FOOTNOTES

- ft334 Amm. Marcell. xxiii. 22. The Ninus taken by Meherdates in 59 A.D. was on the site of the old Ninus, on the other side of the Tigris. Tacitus, Annals xii. 13
- ft335 The existence of the Nineve Claudiopolis is attested by coins. See Vaux in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geogr. v. Ninus
- ft336 The Pere Paul Pezron (*Essai d'un Commentary lit. et. hist. sur les prophetes* 1697) assumed three irruptions of the Scythians: the first prophesied by Amos and Joel; the second, in the reign of Josiah about 631 B.C.; the third, prophesied (he thinks) by Ezekiel 38—39. Baseless as all this is, the characteristic of the late writers is not the selection of the Scythians as the object of the prophecy (which were a thing indifferent) but the grounds alleged for that selection
- ft337 Herodotus i. 106. He uses the same wide expression as to Cyrus, after the defeat of Croesus. "Having subdued him, he thus ruled over all Asia," (i. 130); whereas he had not yet conquered Babylon
- ft338 "More readily might we believe Homer and Hesiod in their tales of heroes, and the tragic poets, than Ctesias and Herodotus and Hellanicus and others of the same sort." xi. 6. 3
- ft339 Berosus in his Chaldaean history, agrees as to these dates, only adding 9 months for the son of Neriglissar, Laborosoarchod, in Josephus, Ant. x. 11. combined with cont. Apion. i. 20, and Eus. Praep. Evang. ix. 40
- ft340 ^{<301B>}Zephaniah 1:13; ^{<1530>}Deuteronomy 28:30,39. The words are more exact than in ^{<3064>}Micah 6:14; ^{<3051>}Amos 5:11
- ft341 Eichhorn, DeWette, Stahelin, and their followers. DeWette, however, does own, "In employing what is not his own, he is, at least, original in its expansion." Einl. 245. note b

ft342 ^{<3187>}Zephaniah 3:17. Some modern commentators take umbrage at the beautiful expression. But the Septuagint renders “shall renew thee;” Ewald, “(God) “becomes young” (sich verjunget) in His love!”

ft343 ^{<1116>}Exodus 6:6; ^{<1144>}Deuteronomy 4:34;5:15; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8; and thence ^{<4221>}Jeremiah 32:21; ^{<1112>}Psalms 136:12. Isaiah had, in the same phrase, prophesied God’s judgments against Israel in the burden ^{<3125>}Isaiah 5:25; 9:11,16; 10:4

ft344 The “chemarim”^{<1364>} is the name of “idolatrous priests” generally, (it occurs also ^{<1235>}2 Kings 23:5; ^{<3105>}Hosea 10:5). In 2 Kings, where is the account of the first fulfillment of this prophecy, they appear as priests of the idolatrous high places, distinct from the priests of Baal and of the “host of heaven.” The name is probably the Syriac name of “priest,” used in Holy Scripture of idolatrous priests, because the Syrians were idolaters. See Gesenius, *Gesch. d. Hebr. Sprache* p. 58

ft345 ^{<4670>}ִתְּמַן is used ^{<1114>}1 Samuel 5:4,5; ^{<3103>}Ezekiel 9:3; 10:4,18; 46:2; 47:1; elsewhere it is usually ^{<1592>}אֵס. There is a trace of this explanation in the Chaldean: “who walk in the laws of the Philistines,” and in Jerome, doubtless from his Jewish teachers. Isaiah’s reproof that they have soothsayers like the Philistines, ^{<3116>}Isaiah 2:6, is altogether different

ft346 Pierotti, “Jerusalem explored” p. 32, from whom this account is taken. Signor Pierotti’s work is “the fruit of eight years of continual labor devoted to a study of the topography of Jerusalem upon the spot, in which I have been constantly occupied in excavating and removing the rubbish accumulated over the place during so many centuries, in retracing the walls, in examining the monuments and ancient remains, and in penetrating and traversing the conduits and vaults.” — “I have,” he says, “made excavations and watched those made by others, have formed intimacies with the inhabitants of the country, have sought for information on the spot, regardless of personal risk, have worked with my own hands underground, and so have obtained much knowledge of that which lies below the surface of the soil in Jerusalem.” Jerusalem explored Pref. p. 8

ft347 (1) At the meat-bazaar near the convent of Mary the Great. “In digging down to the rock to lay the new foundations, 10 feet below the surface, I came upon large stones, boldly rusticated and arranged in a manner that reminded me of the Phoenician work of the time of

Solomon.” (2) on the east of the Church of the Resurrection. (3) “close to the west of the present “judgment gate.”” “In digging down for the rock, I found, 18 feet below the surface, a fragment of a wall, resembling, in all respects, that first described.” Jerusalem explored, Pref. p. 33

ft348 This appeared from excavations made in repairing the then Russian consulate, and from “inquiries of all who in former years had built in this neighborhood.” Jerusalem explored Pref. p. 33

ft349 “These were found when the Effendi Kadduti repaired and partly rebuilt the house in the Via Dolorosa at the “Station of Veronica.” A similar discovery was made by the Mufti in strengthening his house at the “Station of Simon of Cyrene,” and by the Effendi Soliman Giari, opposite to the Mufti’s house on the north. The Armenian Catholic monks requested me to examine and level a piece of land, at the “Station of the first fall of Christ;” which as representative of his nation, he had just bought. In the lower part of the wall enclosing it on the north, very large stones and an ancient gate were found. In the foundations of the Austrian hospice, laid in 1857, to the north of the Armenian property, large stones were discovered, and also further to the east, in the new convent of the Daughters of Sion.” Pierotti pp. 33,34

ft350 ^{<610>}Nehemiah 11:9, the English Version “was second over the city” on account of the absence of the article. I prefer taking it, as in a sort of apposition, as Ewald does, Lehrb. n. 287, 1. p. 734. ed. 8

ft351 Not, as some, “a cry of destruction” as in ^{<215>}Isaiah 15:5. Isaiah has indeed the words **tq[z]** ^{<2201>}, **rbv** ^{<17667>}, “cry of destruction,” but here **hq[x]** ^{<6818>}, **hl ly** ^{<3215>}, **rbv** ^{<17667>} are plainly parallel to one another

ft352 Niphal, of Esau by enemies ^{<3006>}Obadiah 1:6, Piel, for Laban’s idols, ^{<1325>}Genesis 31:35; for Joseph’s cup, ^{<442>}Genesis 44:12; for David in hiding places, ^{<9223>}1 Samuel 23:23; Ahab’s house, ^{<1206>}1 Kings 20:6, for worshipers of God in Baal’s temple, ^{<2023>}2 Kings 10:23; in Caves of Carmel, ^{<3003>}Amos 9:3 (see vol. i. pp. 330-333); divine wisdom, ^{<1004>}Proverbs 2:4; God’s ways, ^{<9707>}Psalms 77:7. The form is intensive here

ft353 **apq** ^{<17087>} is used in two cases of the (as it were) congealing of the waves when they “stood on an heap” ^{<1213>}Exodus 15:8; of the curdling

into cheese ^{<18100>}Job 10:10. Jonathan paraphrases “who are tranquil in their possessions”

ft354 See the English margin on ^{<31816>}Zephaniah 3:6. It is the corner of a house, of a street, of court, a city. Hence, “the gate of the corner,” ^{<21413>}2 Kings 14:13; ^{<14319>}2 Chronicles 26:9; ^{<28138>}Jeremiah 31:38. In ^{<14315>}2 Chronicles 26:15, **h[wr]t** ^{<16438>} cannot be “battlements” (as Gesenius, etc.) since the engines were erected upon them. Neither then here is there any ground to invent a new meaning for the word

ft355 The English Version follows the Septuagint, Chaldee, Syriac, Jerome, which render “Gather yourselves together,” as if, from the first meaning, “gather dry sticks or stubble” it came to signify “gather” generally, and thence, in the reflective form, “gather yourselves together”

ft356 The word is first used of gathering dry stubble together (^{<10107>}Exodus 5:7,12) then of “dry sticks” one by one (^{<11452>}Numbers 15:32,33; ^{<11710>}1 Kings 17:10,12). A pagan speaks of “gathering out thorns” (**εξάκωνθίζειν** ^{<173>} that is, minutely examining and bringing out to light every fault. (Cicero ad Att. vi. 6. 2) And another writes to his steward, “Shalt thou with stronger hand pull out thorns from my field, or I from my mind?” Hor. Ep. i. 14. 4

ft357 ^{<21840>}Lamentations 3:40. The two words, search and try, **rpj** ^{<12564>}, **rqj** ^{<12713>} are both used of a deep search of a thing which lies deep and hidden. Both originally mean “dig.” Both are used of a divine knowledge of the inmost soul; the former of the mind as enlightened by God (^{<11117>}Proverbs 20:27), the latter of God’s searching trout Himself (^{<21170>}Jeremiah 17:10; ^{<19422>}Psalms 44:22 (21); 139:1; ^{<8119>}Job 13:9, and of the Divine Wisdom, ^{<18827>}Job 28:27

ft358 The English margin has “or not desirous,” the word signifying to long, ^{<11313>}Genesis 31:30; ^{<38118>}Psalms 84:3. But in both places the object of desire is mentioned, “thy father’s house,” in Gen., “the courts of the Lord,” in the Psalm Israel had strong but bad longings. “Not desirous” would not by itself convey, “having no desire to return to God,” or as the Chaldee, “who willeth not to return to the law.” The same objection lies, over and above, to the rendering “unashamed,” coll. Chald., “turned pale” from shame, disgrace, horror. Buxt. For there is nothing to limit the “turning pale” to “shame.” The root is here the passive. People turn pale from fear or horror, not from shame

- ft359 It seems to me most probable that the origin of the meanings is preserved in the Chaldee “root,” (which itself is the source of other metaphor meanings as, “the root of a thing;” “the root” that is, the foundation “of faith,” its fundamental doctrines; “the root,” in Lexicography, see Buxtorf), and that the Chaldee, pluck up remove,” and here and ^{<208>}Ecclesiastes 3:2, is a denominative. The proper name is older probably than even Moses
- ft360 Their language alone is mentioned in ^{<102>}Nehemiah 9:24, but neither is it mentioned that the Jews married any other Philistine women. If Gath was destroyed, Ashdod lay nearest to them.
- ft361 William of Tyre (pp. 917, 840, 865) calls them “hydra immanissima,” “hostes immanissimi” — “like restless gnats persevering in the purpose of injuring.” compare pp. 781, 787, 797. “Ascalona was ever an adversary of Jerusalem.” robertus Monachus p. 77. in v. Raumer Palaest. p. 173, ed. 4. It was called “the spouse of Syria,” as an impregnable fortress
- ft362 “The verse, Ekron shall be uprooted, the Talmud says, relates to Caesarea, the daughter of Edom, which is situate among the sands. It does not mean that Ekron is Caesarea, which would be absurd, but only shows its hatred against that city, and foretells its destruction, resting on a Biblical text, as is the habit of the talmudists.” Neubauer Geogr. du Talmud p. 92. See also Ibid. p. 12
- ft363 2. ed. Asher. The enumeration of “about 200 Rabbanite Jews,” with the names of the chief, “about 40 karaites, and about 300 Cuthaeans” shows personal acquaintance. The former name of the “new Ascalon” and the supposed distance of the ruins of the old, he must have learned on the spot
- ft364 “Benibra” looks like a corruption of “a place of pure water,” like “Bebaten, Bedora, Beestera, Begabar” etc. in Reland. 617, following. The Gadite town of that name becomes in Eusebius βηθναβρις
- ft365 ^{<256>}Ezekiel 25:16. It may be that they were so called as coming from Crete as the Septuagint supposed, rendering “Cretans” in Ezek., and here (as also the Syr.) “sojourners of the Cretans.” Hence, perhaps also Tacitus’ statement (Hist. v. 2) that the Jews had been expelled from Crete. The other versions render the word as an appellative, “destroying” or “destroyed.” Aquila and ε : εθνος ^{<1484>} ολεθριον

<3639>, Theodotion: εθνος <1484> ολεθριας <3639>, Symmachus: εθνος <1484> ολεθρευομενον <3639>. Jerome gives “perditorem”

ft366 “The ten portions of Manasseh” <676> Joshua 17:5; “Why hast thou given me one lot and one portion?” <674> Joshua 17:14; “out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon” <699> Joshua 19:9

ft367 <626> Numbers 25:1,3. The rank of the Midianite lady who gave herself as a partner of the sin of the Simeonite chief (<626> Numbers 25:6,14,15,18) shows how much store the Midianites set on that seduction

ft368 It was probably the narrow valley some three miles long between the northern end of that remarkable salt mountain, the Jebel or Khasm Usdum and the dead sea. See the description in Tristram’s land of Isr., p. 326 following. At its north extremity at the mouth of Wady Zuweirah there are considerable traces of (perhaps Roman) buildings. A tower placed here would command the entrance of the valley of salt, and this may well have been the site of the city of salt

ft369 Seetzen guessed (Reisen ii. 356) and Robinson considered it certain (ii. 109) that “the valley of salt,” was the lower part of the ‘Arabah close to the Dead Sea, between Edom and Judaea. But:

i. This is spoken of as a “great plain” (Seetzen p. 355) and although the word *ayg* <1516> is twice used of as large valley;

(1) the valley over against Baal Peor, where all Israel was encamped <689> Deuteronomy 3:29; 4:46;

(2) that of Zephathah, where Asa, with an army of 580,000 men, defeated Zerah the Ethiopian with 1,000,000 (<440> 2 Chronicles 14:10) this is the exception. In eleven other places it is used of a narrow valley.

ii. The depression, south of the Dead Sea down to the Red Sea, had, in the time of Moses, the same title as now, the “Arabah,” <600> Deuteronomy 1:1; 2:8.

iii. The space, near the Dead Sea, which is salt, “the Sebkhah, or desolate sand-swamp” (Tristram Moab, p. 41) is impracticable for men; much more for an army. “The Sebkhah or salt-flat is a large flat, of at least 6 by 10 miles from north to south. Taught by the experience of M. de Saulcy, we made no attempt to cross it to the northward, as the mud

would have been far too deep and treacherous for us to pass in safety” (Id. land of Israel p. 336). “The land south of the Sebkhah is not salt, but rich and fertile” (Id. p. 338). See de Saulcy Voyage en Syrie, etc. p. 248-256).

ft370 In this place only Mesha speaks of the king of Israel’s war with him in the past. Elsewhere he speaks of himself only as being on the offensive. “I fought against the city” (Ataroth); “I fought against it” (Nebo); “go down, fight against Horonaim.” The king of Israel is apparently the same throughout, Omri

ft371 “Near the confluence of the Ledjoun and the Mojob” (Arnon) “about 1 mile east of the bridge across the Mojob, there seems to be a fine verdant pasture ground, in the midst of which stands a hill with some ruins upon it.” Burckhardt Ibid. 373,4

ft372 I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed; I built Bezer, for” (the rest is conjecture) **hnb**^{<h1129>} probably, in such simple Hebrew, signifies, in regard to all the towns, built. It is the one although it is rarely used of building on to existing towns and fortifying them (^{<h1157>}1 Kings 15:17; ^{<h1107>}2 Chronicles 11:7). It is probably here used of re-building; since the cause of the building was the previous destruction

ft373 A break in the stone leaves the subject uncertain, “in my day said (...), and I will look upon him and upon his house, and Israel perished with an everlasting destruction.” Schlottman conjectures, probably, “Chemosh.” Ganneau renders as if it were past, so Haug, Geiger, Neubauer, Wright; Schlottman, Noldeke, and Ginsburg, as future, though Ginsburg alone renders, “And Israel said, I shall destroy it forever,” which is impossible

ft374 e.g., “3/4 of an hour further, we reached the ruins of el-Eale; 1 1/2 hour further, we came to Husban; beside some overthrown pillars, nothing important is found here. On the east, about 1 1/2 hour, are the ruins of Shelul: after an hour on this plain we came to 3 wasted places, close together; 1/2 an hour further, we reached the ruins of what formerly was Madaba; 1/2 an hour further lay the ruined village of Tueme: above an hour to the west the important ruins of Maein.” Ibid. 407,8

ft375 “A little north of el-Eale we came on good soil, which however lay wholly uncultivated and was mostly overgrown with the prickly little Bullan, which gave the country the look of moor-ground.” Seetzen

Travels, i. 406. "The soil here (Heshbon) is in this district excellent, but it lies wholly uncultivated and serves only for pasture to the little herds of sheep, goats, kine and camels of the Arabs." Ibid. p. 407. "The Arabs cultivate a little ground near Madaba." p. 409. "The land (the other side the Mujeb (Arnon) and so in Moab proper) had little grass, but there was an extraordinary quantity of wormwood on it. Yet the soil seems excellent for wheat, although no spot was cultivated. Large spots had the look of our moors from the quantity of wormwood and other little shrubs." p. 410. "Here and there, there were tokens of cultivation, wheatfields; the wheat was good." p. 412

ft376 See Mr. Tristram's picture of "a ruin-covered ridge by an immense tank of solid masonry, 140 yards by 110 yards, at Ziza. From the surface of the water to the edge of the tank was 17 feet 6 inches. The masonry was simply magnificent. The whole system and artificial sluices were precisely similar to ancient works for irrigation in India and Ceylon. — Such works easily explain to us the enormous population, of which the ruined cities give evidence. Everywhere is some artificial means of retaining the occasional supplies of rain water. So long as these precious structures remained in order, cultivation was continuous and famines remained unknown. — The Islamite invasion left the miserable remnants of a dense and thriving nation entirely dependent on the neighboring countries for their supply of corn: a dependence which must continue until these border lands are secure from the inroad of the predatory bands of the East." Land of Moab pp. 183-186. At Kustul is "a massive wall in the plain, about 600 yards in length across the valley, and 18 feet thick, built to dam up the water in the gentle depression, the head of the wady." Ibid. c. 12. p. 220. "Gor el Mesraa, as far as the soil can be watered, evinces a luxuriant fertility. By far the greater part of it is a waste." Seetz. ii. 352. "Gor el Zaphia owes its fruitfulness entirely to the water of the Wady el Hossa, which is guided to the fields in many canals. But only a very small portion of this exceedingly rich soil is cultivated, the rest is overgrown with bushes and shrubs, wherein very many wild boars hyenas and other wild animals live." Ibid. 355. "This water too (of the Nimmery) is said formerly to have been used for watering some fields, of which there is now no trace." Ibid. 354

ft377 "True, the land is not our's, but our people are many, and who shall dare to prevent them from going where they please? You will find them

everywhere, if the land is good for them.” Answer of Bent Sakkr Sheikh, Tristram Moab. c. 15. p. 28

ft378 “East of Assalt, including Ammon, are thirty ruined or deserted places of which names are given in Dr. Smith’s Arabic lists.” Keith, Prophecy p. 274. “All this country, formerly so populous and flourishing, is now changed into a vast desert.” Seetzen Brief account etc. p. 34. Ibid. p. 263. “The far greater part of this country is uninhabited, being abandoned to the wandering Arabs, and the towns and villages are in a state of total ruin.” Id. p. 37. Ibid. “Two hours from Szalt we came upon some peasants, who were plowing some little fields near what was a little fountain.” Seetzen i. 405. “The soil was excellent; but only here and there we saw a little spot cultivated, and this by the Adrian Arabs.” p. 406. “The country that lay in our route (near Daboah) though now bare of wood, presented a great extent of fertile soil, lying entirely waste, though equal to any of the very best portions of Galilee and Samaria, and capable of producing sustenance for a large population. Around us, in every direction, were remains of more than 50 towns or villages, once maintained by the productive soil, over which they were so thickly studded.” Buckingham Travels among the Arab tribes p. 66. “At Mahanafish we had arrived at a very elevated part of the plain, which had continued fertile throughout the whole distance from Ammon.” p. 81. “south-southeast of Yedoody we pushed our way over a continuous tract of fertile soil, capable of the highest cultivation. Throughout the whole extent of the plain were seen ruined towns in every direction, before, behind, on each side, generally seated on small eminences, all at a short distance from each other, and all, as far as we had yet seen, bearing evident marks of former opulence. There was not a tree in sight; but my guide assured me, that the whole of the plain was covered with the finest soil, and capable of being made the most productive corn-land in the world.” Ibid. p. 85

ft379 ^{<0442>}Numbers 14:21, (of the glory which God should have in all the world) from his chastisement of, Israel) ^{<0443>}Numbers 14:28; ^{<634>}Deuteronomy 32:40, (adding ׀ w [l]) ^{<1576>}^{<2024>}Jeremiah 22:24; ^{<3151>}Ezekiel 5:11; 14:16,18,20; 16:48; (as Judge) ^{<2576>}Ezekiel 17:16,19; 18:3; (in rebuke) ^{<3313>}Ezekiel 20:3,31,33; 33:27; 34:8; 35:11. In the same sense, I swear by Myself, ^{<2275>}Jeremiah 22:5; 49:13; hath sworn by Himself, ^{<308>}Amos 6:8; by the excellency of Jacob, ^{<3107>}Amos 8:7

ft380 ^{<2226>}Isaiah 22:16 “What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee here a sepulchre? Hewing him out on high his sepulchre, graving in the rock a dwelling for him.” ^{<300>}Micah 1:2, “Hear, ye people, all of them.” ^{<1525>}Deuteronomy 32:15, “Thou art waxen fat art grown thick, art covered with fatness; and he forsook God Who made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation”

ft381 DeSacy, loc. cit. who quotes Abulfeda (see his hist. ante-Islam. p. 102. he could not find the names of Egyptian kings between Shishak and the Pharaoh who was the contemporary of Nebuch.) Masudi, Nosairi, also

ft382 “nation,” of gregarious creatures, locusts, ^{<2006>}Joel 1:6; 2:2; “ants,” ^{<1825>}Proverbs 30:25. “conies,” ^{<1826>}Proverbs 30:26. Compare **εθνεα χηνων**, etc. “apium populi,” “equorum gentes,” Virgil, Georg. iv. 430. Arabic, Boch. Hieroz. ii. 408. Leipz

ft383 ^{<2148>}Isaiah 14:8; 37:24; ^{<2516>}Ezekiel 31:16. “In the fragment of another epigraph, we have mention of some objects also of wood, ‘brought from Matthew Lebanon, (and taken up to the mound) from the Tigris.’” Layard, Nineveh and Babylon. p. 118. “At that time the countries that are upon Lebanon, I took possession of, to the great sea of the country of Akkari,” (the Mediterranean,) from Inscription. Ibid. p. 355,356. “The conqueror from the upper passage of the Tigris to Lebanon and the Great Sea.” Ibid. p. 361. “Standing one day on a distant part of the mound, I smelt the sweet smell of burning cedar; the Arab workmen excavating in the small temple had dug out a beam, and the weather being cold, had at once made a fire to warm themselves. The wood was cedar, probably one of the very beams mentioned in the inscription, as brought from the forests of Lebanon, by the King who built the edifice. After a lapse of nearly 3,000 years, it had retained its original fragrance.” Ibid. p. 357

ft384 As we might say “no second I.” This gives an adequate explanation of the Hebrew letter yodh (y) in **yspa** ^{<4657>}, as no other rendering does

ft385 **ywh** ^{<11945>} as a separate vocative, as ^{<41515>}Numbers 15:15; ^{<2006>}Song of Solomon 6:1; ^{<2510>}Isaiah 52:18; ^{<3007>}Micah 2:7, etc., and in the New Testament **ὁ** ^{<3588>} **βασιλευς** ^{<935>}, ^{<4179>}Matthew 27:29; **ὁ** ^{<3588>} **ὑιος** ^{<5207>}, ^{<4107>}Mark 10:47; **ὁ** ^{<3588>} **πατηρ** ^{<3962>} ^{<4148>}Mark 14:36, etc.

ft386 The meaning of the Piel, in ^{<0418>}Numbers 24:8, and met. ^{<2234>}Ezekiel 23:34 as denom. from poetic “bone.” The Verss. gave the meaning,

dropping the metaphor, the Septuagint and Vulgate rendering “left;” Chaldee, “deferring to,” Syriac, “waiting for.” In Arabic signifies “cut off,” spec. wool of sheep, fruit of palm-trees.” In Syriac it is: (1) “cut off;” (2) “decreed;” not, “reserved.” Abulw. Kim. Menach. render “break” as denominative

ft387 **twzj p** ^{<h630>} being used by Jeremiah (^{<2432>}Jeremiah 23:32) of the false prophets who prophesy false dreams and do tell them and cause My people to err by their lies and by their lightness, it probably has the same meaning here

ft388 ^{<2234>}Exodus 32:34; ^{<2331>}Isaiah 13:11; ^{<2432>}Jeremiah 23:2; ^{<2804>}Hosea 1:4; 2:13; 4:9; ^{<3082>}Amos 3:2,14; beside the separate cases of:

(a) visiting upon, or

(b) visiting the sin.

See Gesenius

ft389 The word means originally “placed on the back;” then is used of a traveler, who taking his baggage upon him, or setting it on his camels, sets out in very early dawn, or before it, as is the practice in hot countries

ft390 **twl yl** [^{<15949>} are the “mighty works” of God, or deeds of man’s might, and, as such, mostly great crimes in the sight of God. So even the pagan have formed from “facio,” “facinus,” of deeds which they too held to involve great guilt

ft391 **hkj** ^{<h2442>} is mostly a yearning, persevering expectation for a thing or person which as yet comes not, when the delay requires patience, for God, with **l**, ^{<1933>}Psalm 33:20; ^{<2307>}Isaiah 8:7; 64:3; His promise, ^{<3113>}Habakkuk 2:3, and (the Qal participle in the sense of the Piel) ^{<2308>}Isaiah 30:18; with negative ^{<19463>}Psalm 106:13, for death. ^{<1820>}Job 3:20; of endurance, ^{<7122>}Daniel 12:12. The only other cases are lying in wait, ^{<3119>}Hosea 6:9, waiting for the end of Job’s words, ^{<1820>}Job 32:4, for the issue of the message to Jehu, ^{<1103>}2 Kings 9:3; until dawn, ^{<1103>}2 Kings 7:9; and of God, waiting for us, until He can show us mercy, ^{<2308>}Isaiah 30:18

ft392 ^{<01103>}Genesis 11:1,6,7,9. The Jews also saw that this was a reversal of the confusion of Babel. “God, blessed forever, saith, ‘in this world, on account of evil concupiscence (man’s natural corruption) men were

divided into 70 languages; but in the world to come, all shall agree with one mind to call upon My Name;”“ alleging this place. Tanchuma f. 5. 1. ap. Schoettg. ad loc. “R. Chiia said, ‘thou hearest from holy Scripture, that all hangeth from the word of the mouth;’ for after the tongues were confounded, it is added, and God dispersed them thence’ But in the time to come, what is written? ‘Then will I turn etc.’” Sohar, Gen f. 58. col. 217 (Schoettg. loc. gen n. 37). Again it is said, “when the days of the Messiah shall come, boys shall know the hidden things of wisdom, for then shall all things be revealed, as is said, Then will I turn etc.” Ibid. f. 74. col. 291. Ibid. ad loc. And of its fulfillment in the conversion of the world, “Who would have expected that God would raise up the tabernacle of David, which was fallen? and yet it is read, ‘In that day I will raise ...’ (^{<399B>}Amos 9:11). And who would have hoped that the whole world would be one band? as in, Then will I turn etc.” Bereshith rabba n. 88 fin. Schoettg. loci gen. n. 18, and on ^{<3444>}Genesis 41:44; “Why is, ‘they shall praise Thee’ repeated four times in ^{<3504>}Psalm 67:4? He means, ‘They shall praise Thee with their heart; they shall praise Thee with their mouth; they shall praise Thee with their good deeds, and they shall praise Thee with all these, as it is said, For then will I turn etc.’ and the Name of the Lord is no other than the King Messiah, according to, ‘and the Name of the Lord cometh from far.’” in Mart. Pug. Fid f. 327. It is also quoted with other places, as to be fulfilled in the time of the Messiah, Tikkune Sohar p. 60 (Schoettg. Loc. gen. n. 80), R. Moseh in Ibn Ezra, and Ibn Ezra himself, of the second temple. Kimchi “after the wars of Gog”

ft393 It is possible also to render, “from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. My suppliants the daughter of My dispersed shall they bring as Mine offering;” arid this some have preferred on account of the like place in ^{<336D>}Isaiah 66:20, “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations etc.”

ft394 Tertullian, Apol. c. 44, 45. See also Justin M. i. n. 34. Athenagoras n. 2; Minutius Felix p. 333. Theodoret de cur. Graec. aff. Disp. xii. circ. med. p. 1021 following ed Schultz; Lactant. v. 9. quoted Ibid.

ft395 Beside this place, the word is used of “the clearing of a house,” ^{<325E>}Genesis 24:31; ^{<3546>}Leviticus 14:36; “a way,” ^{<340B>}Isaiah 40:3; 57:14; 62:10; ^{<330B>}Malachi 3:1; “clearing ground,” ^{<380D>}Psalm 80:10