

CHAPTER 3

The prophet, in this chapter, goes on to foretell the desolations that were coming upon Judah and Jerusalem for their sins, both that by the Babylonians and that which completed their ruin by the Romans, with some of the grounds of God's controversy with them. God threatens,

I. To deprive them of all the supports both of their life and of their government (v. 1-3).

II. To leave them to fall into confusion and disorder (v. 4, 5, 12).

III. To deny them the blessing of magistracy (v. 6-8).

IV. To strip the daughters of Zion of their ornaments (v. 17-24).

V. To lay all waste by the sword of war (v. 25, 26). The sins that provoked God to deal thus with them were,

1. Their defiance of God (v. 8).

2. Their impudence (v. 9).

3. The abuse of power to oppression and tyranny (v. 12-15).

4. The pride of the daughters of Zion (v. 16). In the midst of the chapter the prophet is directed how to address particular persons.

(1.) To assure good people that it should be well with them, notwithstanding those general calamities (v. 10).

(2.) To assure wicked people that, however God might, in judgment, remember mercy, yet it should go ill with them (v. 11). O that the nations of the earth, at this day, would hearken to rebukes and warnings which this chapter gives!

ISAIAH 3:1-8

JUDGMENTS DENOUNCED

The prophet, in the close of the foregoing chapter, had given a necessary caution to all not to put confidence in man, or any creature; he had also given a general reason for that caution, taken from the frailty of human life

and the vanity and weakness of human powers. Here he gives a particular reason for it — God was now about to ruin all their creature-confidences, so that they should meet with nothing but disappointments in all their expectations from them (v. 1): *The stay and the staff* shall be taken away, all their supports, of what kind soever, all the things they trusted to and looked for help and relief from. Their church and kingdom had now grown old and were going to decay, and they were (after the manner of aged men, ^{<388>}Zechariah 8:4) leaning on a staff: now God threatens to take away their staff, and then they must fall of course, to take away the stays of both the city and the country, of Jerusalem and of Judah, which are indeed stays to one another, and, if one fail, the other feels from it. He that does this is *the Lord, the Lord of hosts* — *Adon*, the Lord that is himself the stay or foundation; if that stay depart, all other stays certainly break under us, for he is the strength of them all. He that is the Lord, the ruler, that has authority to do it, and the Lord of hosts, that has the ability to do it, he shall take away the stay and the staff. St. Jerome refers this to the sensible decay of the Jewish nation after they had crucified our Saviour, ^{<519>}Romans 11:9, 10. I rather take it as a warning to all nations not to provoke God; for if they make him their enemy, he can and will thus make them miserable. Let us view the particulars.

I. Was their plenty a support to them? It is so to any people; bread is the staff of life: but God can *take away the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water*; and it is just with him to do so when fulness of bread becomes an iniquity (^{<369>}Ezekiel 16:49), and that which was given to be provision for the life is made provision for the lusts. He can take away the bread and the water by withholding the rain, ^{<533>}Deuteronomy 28:23, 24. Or, if he allow them, he can take away the stay of bread and the stay of water by withholding his blessing, by which man lives, and not by bread only, and which is the staff of bread (^{<400>}Matthew 4:4.), and then the bread is not nourishing nor the water refreshing, ^{<306>}Haggai 1:6. Christ is the bread of life and the water of life; if he be our stay, we shall find that this is a good part not to be taken away, ^{<404>}John 4:14; 6:27.

II. Was their army a support to them — their generals, and commanders, and military men? These shall be taken away, either cut off by the sword or so discouraged with the defeats they meet with that they shall throw up their commissions and resolve to act no more; or they shall be disabled by sickness, or dispirited, so as to be unfit for business; *The mighty men, and*

the man of war, and even the inferior officer, *the captain of fifty*, shall be removed. It bodes ill with a people when their valiant men are lost. Let not the strong man therefore glory in his strength, nor any people trust too much to their mighty men; but let the strong *people glorify God* and *the city of the terrible nations fear him*, who can make them weak and despicable, ^{<238>}Isaiah 25:3.

III. Were their ministers of state a support to them — their learned men, their politicians, their clergy, their wits and virtuoso? These also should be taken away — *the judges*, who were skilled in the laws, and expert in administering justice, — *the prophets*, whom they used to consult in difficult cases, — *the prudent*, who were celebrated as men of sense and sagacity above all others and were assistants to the judges, *the diviners* (so the word is), those who used unlawful arts, who, though rotten stays, yet were stayed on, (but it may be taken, as we read it, in a good sense), — *the ancients*, elders in age, in office, — *the honourable man*, the gravity of whose aspect commands reverence and whose age and experience make him fit to be a counsellor. Trade is one great support to a nation, even manufactures and handicraft trades; and therefore, when the whole stay is broken, *the cunning artificer* too shall be taken away; and the last is *the eloquent orator*, the man skilful of speech, who in some cases may do good service, though he be none of the prudent or the ancient, by putting the sense of others in good language. Moses cannot speak well, but Aaron can. God threatens to take these away, that is,

- 1.** To disable them for the service of their country, *making judges fools, taking away the speech of the trusty and the understanding of the aged*, ^{<827>}Job 12:17, etc. Every creature is that to us which God makes it to be; and we cannot be sure that those who have been serviceable to us shall always be so.
- 2.** To put an end to their days; for the reason why princes are not to be trusted in is because their *breath goeth forth*, ^{<348>}Psalm 146:3, 4. Note, The removal of useful men by death, in the midst of their usefulness, is a very threatening symptom to any people.

IV. Was their government a support to them? It ought to have been so; it is the business of the sovereign to bear up the pillars of the land, ^{<358>}Psalm 75:3. But it is here threatened that this stay should fail them. When the mighty men and the prudent are removed *children shall be their princes*

— children in age, who must be under tutors and governors, who will be clashing with one another and making a prey of the young king and his kingdom — children in understanding and disposition, childish men, such as are babes in knowledge, no more fit to rule than a child in the cradle. These shall rule over them, with all the folly, fickleness, and frowardness, of a child. And *woe unto thee, O land! when thy king is such a one!*

^{<106}Ecclesiastes 10:16.

V. Was the union of the subjects among themselves, their good order and the good understanding and correspondence that they kept with one another, a stay to them? Where this is the case a people may do better for it, though their princes be not such as they should be; but it is here threatened that God would send an evil spirit among them too (as ^{<103}Judges 9:23), which would make them,

1. Injurious and unneighbourly one towards another (v. 5): “*The people shall be oppressed every one by his neighbour,*” and their princes, being children, will take no care to restrain the oppressors or relieve the oppressed, nor is it to any purpose to appeal to them (which is a temptation to every man to be his own avenger), and therefore they bite and devour one another and will soon be consumed one of another. Then *homo homini lupus — man becomes a wolf to man; jusque datum sceleri — wickedness receives the stamp of law; nec hospes ab hospite tutus — the guest and the host are in danger from each other.*

2. Insolent and disorderly towards their superiors. It is as ill an omen to a people as can be when the rising generation among them are generally untractable, rude, and ungovernable, when *the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient*, whereas he should *rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man*, ^{<103}Leviticus 19:32. When young people are conceited and pert, and behave scornfully towards their superiors, their conduct is not only a reproach to themselves, but of ill consequence to the public; it slackens the reins of government and weakens the hands that hold them. It is likewise ill with a people when persons of honour cannot support their authority, but are affronted by the base and beggarly, when judges are insulted and their powers set at defiance by the mob. Those have a great deal to answer for who do this.

VI. It is some stay, some support, to hope that, though matters may be now ill-managed, yet other may be raised up, who may manage better? Yet

this expectation also shall be frustrated, for the case shall be so desperate that no man of sense or substance will meddle with it.

1. The government shall go a begging, v. 6. Here,

(1.) It is taken for granted that there is no way of redressing all these grievances, and bringing things into order again, but by good magistrates, who shall be invested with power by common consent, and shall exert that power for the good of the community. And it is probable that this was, in many places, the true origin of government; men found it necessary to unite in a subjection to one who was thought fit for such a trust, in order to the welfare and safety of them all, being aware that they must either be ruled or ruined. Here therefore is the original contract: *“Be thou our ruler, and we will be subject to thee, and let this ruin be under thy hand, to be repaired and restored, and then to be preserved and established, and the interests of it advanced,* ^{<282>} Isaiah 58:12. Take care to protect us by the sword of war from being injured from abroad, and by the sword of justice from being injurious to another, and we will bear faith and true allegiance to thee.”

(2.) The case is represented as very deplorable, and things as having come to a sad pass; for,

[1.] Children being their princes, every man will think himself fit to prescribe who shall be a magistrate, and will be for preferring his own relations; whereas, if the princes were as they should be, it would be left entirely to them to nominate the rulers, as it ought to be.

[2.] Men will find themselves under a necessity even of forcing power into the hands of those that are thought to be fit for it: *A man shall take hold* by violence of one to make him a ruler, perceiving him ready to resist the motion: nay, he shall urge it upon his brother; whereas, commonly, men are not willing that their equals should be their superiors, witness the envy of Joseph's brethren.

[3.] It will be looked upon as ground sufficient for the preferring of a man to be a ruler that he has clothing better than his neighbours — a very poor qualification to recommend a man to a place of trust in the government. It was a sign that the country was much impoverished when it was a rare thing to find a man that had good clothes, or could afford to buy himself an alderman's gown or a judge's robes; and it was proof enough that the

people were very unthinking when they had so much respect to a man in *gay clothing, with a gold ring* (^{<51P>}James 2:2, 3), that, for the sake thereof, they would make him their ruler. It would have been some sense to have said, “Thou hast wisdom, integrity, experience; be thou our ruler.” But it was a jest to say, *Thou hast clothing; be thou our ruler. A poor wise man, though in vile raiment, delivered a city,* ^{<205>}Ecclesiastes 9:15. We may allude to this to show how desperate the case of fallen man was when our Lord Jesus was pleased to become our brother, and, though he was not courted, offered himself to be our ruler and Saviour, and to take this ruin under his hand.

2. Those who are thus pressed to come into office will swear themselves off, because, though they are taken to be men of some substance, yet they know themselves unable to bear the charges of the office and to answer the expectations of those that choose them (v. 7): *He shall swear* (shall lift up the hand, the ancient ceremony used in taking the oath) *I will not be a healer; make not me a ruler.* Note, Rulers must be healers, and good rulers will be so; they must study to unite their subjects, and not to widen the differences that are among them. Those only are fit for government that are of a meek, quiet, healing, spirit. They must also heal the wounds that are given to any of the interests of their people, by suitable applications. But why will he not be a ruler? Because *in my house is neither bread nor clothing.*

(1.) If he said true, it was a sign that men's estates were sadly ruined when even those who made the best appearance really wanted necessaries — a common case, and a piteous one. Some who, having lived fashionably, are willing to put the best side outwards, are yet, if the truth were known, in great straits, and go with heavy hearts for want of bread and clothing.

(2.) If he did not speak truth, it was a sign that men's consciences were sadly debauched, when, to avoid the expense of an office, they would load themselves with the guilt of perjury, and (which is the greatest madness in the world) would damn their souls to save their money, ^{<106>}Matthew 16:26.

(3.) However it was, it was a sign that the case of the nation was very bad when nobody was willing to accept a place in the government of it, as despairing to have either credit or profit by it, which are the two things aimed at in men's common ambition of preferment.

3. The reason why God brought things to this sad pass, even among his own people (which is given either by the prophet or by him that refused to be a ruler); it was not for want of good will to his country, but because he saw the case desperate and past relief, and it would be to no purpose to attempt it (v. 8): *Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen*; and they may thank themselves. They have brought their destruction upon their own heads, for *their tongue and their doings are against the Lord*; in word and action they broke the law of God and therein designed an affront to him; they wilfully intended to offend him, in contempt of his authority and defiance of his justice. Their tongue was against the Lord, for they contradicted his prophets; and their doings were no better, for they acted as they talked. It was an aggravation of their sin that God's eye was upon them, and that his glory was manifested among them; but they provoked him to his face, as if the more they knew of his glory the greater pride they took in slighting it, and turning it into shame. And this, this, is it for which Jerusalem is ruined. Note, The ruin both of persons and people is owing to their sins. If they did not provoke God, he would *do them no hurt*, ~~2876~~Jeremiah 25:6.

~~2878~~ ISAIAH 3:9-15

JUDGMENTS DENOUNCED

Here God proceeds in his controversy with his people. Observe,

I. The ground of his controversy. It was for sin that God contended with them; if they vex themselves, let them look a little further and they will see that they must *thank themselves: Woe unto their souls! For they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Alas for their souls!* (so it may be read, in a way of lamentation), *for they have procured evil to themselves*, v. 9. Note, The condition of sinners is woeful and very deplorable. Note, also, It is the soul that is damaged and endangered by sin. Sinners may prosper in their outward estates, and yet at the same time there may be a woe to their souls. Note, further, Whatever evils befalls sinners it is of their own procuring, ~~2879~~Jeremiah 2:19. That which is here charged upon them is,

1. That the shame which should have restrained them from their sins was quite thrown off and they had grown impudent, v. 9. This hardens men against repentance, and ripens them for ruin, as much as anything: *The*

show of their countenance doth witness against them that their minds are vain, and lewd, and malicious; their eyes declare plainly that they *cannot cease from sin*, ^{<0124>}2 Peter 2:14. One may look them in the face and guess at the desperate wickedness that there is in their hearts: *They declare their sin as Sodom*, so impetuous, so imperious, are their lusts, and so impatient of the least check, and so perfectly are all the remaining sparks of virtue extinguished in them. The Sodomites declared their sin, not only by the exceeding greatness of it (^{<0133>}Genesis 13:13), so that it cried to heaven (^{<0133>}Genesis 18:20), but by their shameless owning of that which was most shameful (^{<0135>}Genesis 19:5); and thus Judah and Jerusalem did: they were so far from hiding it that they gloried in it, in the bold attempts they made upon virtue, and the victory they gained over their own convictions. They had a whore's forehead (^{<0137>}Jeremiah 3:3) and could not blush, ^{<0135>}Jeremiah 6:15. Note, Those that have grown impudent in sin are ripe for ruin. Those that are past shame (we say) are past grace, and then past hope.

2. That their guides, who should direct them in the right way, put them out of the way (v. 12): *“Those who lead thee (the princes, priests, and prophets) mislead thee; they cause thee to err.”* Either they preached to them that which was false and corrupt, or, if they preached that which was true and good, they contradicted it by their practices, and the people would soon follow a bad example than a good exhortation. Thus they *destroyed the ways of their paths*, pulling down with one hand what they built up with the other. *Que te beatificant — Those that call thee blessed* cause thee to err; so some read it. Their priests applauded them, as if nothing were amiss among them, cried *Peace, peace*, to them, as if they were in no danger; and thus they caused them to go on in their errors.

3. That their judges, who should have patronized and protected the oppressed, were themselves the greatest oppressors, v. 14, 15. The elders of the people, and the princes, who had learning and could not but know better things, who had great estates and were not under the temptation of necessity to encroach upon those about them, and who were men of honour and should have scorned to do a base thing, yet *they have eaten up the vineyard*. God's vineyard, which they were appointed to be the dressers and keepers of, they burnt (so the word signifies); they did as ill by it as its worst enemies could do, ^{<0136>}Psalms 80:16. Or the vineyards of the poor they wrested out of their possession, as Jezebel did Naboth's, or devoured the fruits of them, fed their lusts with that which should have been the necessary food of indigent families; the spoil of the poor was hoarded up

in their houses; when God came to search for stolen goods there he found it, and it was a witness against them. It was to be had, and they might have made restitution, but would not. God reasons with these great men (v. 15): “*What mean you, that you beat my people into pieces? What cause have you for it? What good does it do you?*” Or, “*What hurt have they done you? Do you think you had power given you for such a purpose as this?*” Note, There is nothing more unaccountable, and yet nothing which must more certainly be accounted for, than the injuries and abuses that are done to God's people by their persecutors and oppressors. “*You grind the faces of the poor; you put them to as much pain and terror as if they were ground in a mill, and as certainly reduce them to dust by one act of oppression after another.*” Or, “*Their faces are bruised and crushed with the blows you have given them; you have not only ruined their estates, but have given them personal abuses.*” Our Lord Jesus was *smitten on the face*, ⁴⁸⁶Matthew 26:67.

II. The management of this controversy.

1. God himself is the prosecutor (v. 13): *The Lord stands up to plead*, or he sets himself to debate the matter, and he *stands to judge the people*, to judge for those that were oppressed and abused; and he will *enter into judgment with the princes*, v. 14. Note, The greatest of men cannot exempt or secure themselves from the scrutiny and sentence of God's judgment, nor demur to the jurisdiction of the court of heaven.

2. The indictment is proved by the notorious evidence of the fact: “*Look upon the oppressors, and the show of their countenance witnesses against them* (v. 9); look upon the oppressed, and you see how their faces are battered and abused,” v. 15.

3. The controversy is already begun in the change of the ministry. To punish those that had abused their power to bad purposes God sets those over them that had not sense to use their power to any good purposes: *Children are their oppressors, and women rule over them* (v. 12), men that have as weak judgments and strong passions as women and children: this was their sin, that their rulers were such, and it became a judgment upon them.

III. The distinction that shall be made between particular persons, in the prosecution of this controversy (v. 10, 11): *Say to the righteous, It shall be well with thee. Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him.* He had said (v.

9), they have rewarded evil to themselves, in proof of which he here shows that God will *render to every man according to his works*. Had they been righteous, it would have been well with them; but, if it be ill with them, it is because they are wicked and will be so. Thus God stated the matter to Cain, to convince him that he had no reason to be angry, ~~GEN~~Genesis 4:7. Or it may be taken thus: God is threatening national judgments, which will ruin the public interests. Now,

1. Some good people might fear that they should be involved in that ruin, and therefore God bids the prophets comfort them against those fears: “Whatever becomes of the unrighteous nation, let *the righteous man* know that he shall not be lost in the crowd of sinners; the *Judge of all the earth will not slay the righteous with the wicked* (~~GEN~~Genesis 18:25); no, assure him, in God’s name, that *it shall be well with him*. The property of the trouble shall be altered to him, and he shall be *hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger*. He shall have divine supports and comforts, which shall abound as afflictions abound, and so it shall be well with him.” When the whole *stay of bread is taken away*, yet in the *day of famine the righteous shall be satisfied*; they shall eat the fruit of their doings — they shall have the testimony of their consciences for them that they kept themselves pure from the common iniquity, and therefore the common calamity is not the same thing to them that it is to others; they brought no fuel to the flame, and therefore are not themselves fuel for it.

2. Some wicked people might hope that they should escape that ruin, and therefore God bids the prophets shake their vain hopes: “*Woe to the wicked; it shall be ill with him*, v. 11. To him the judgments shall have sting, and there shall be *wormwood and gall* in the *affliction and misery*.” There is a woe to wicked people, and, though they may think to shelter themselves from public judgments, yet it shall be ill with them; it will grow worse and worse with them if they repent not, and the worst of all will be at last; for *the reward of their hands shall be given them*, in the day when every man shall receive according to the things done in the body.

ISAIAH 3:16-26

THE VANITY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION

The prophet's business was to show all sorts of people what they had contributed to the national guilt and what share they must expect in the national judgments that were coming. Here he reproves and warns the daughters of Zion, tells the ladies of their faults; and Moses, in the law, having denounced God's wrath against *the tender and delicate woman* (the prophets being a comment upon the law, ^{<5386>}Deuteronomy 28:56), he here tells them how they shall smart by the calamities that are coming upon them. Observe,

I. The sin charged upon the daughters of Zion, v. 16. The prophet expressly vouches God's authority for what he said. lest it should be thought it was unbecoming in him to take notice of such things, and should be resented by the ladies: *The Lord saith it*. "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, let them know that God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the folly and vanity of proud women, and his law takes cognizance even of their dress." Two things that here stand indicted for — haughtiness and wantonness, directly contrary to that *modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety, with which women ought to adorn themselves*, ^{<5389>}1 Timothy 2:9. They discovered the disposition of their mind by their gait and gesture, and the lightness of their carriage. They are haughty, for they *walk with stretched-forth necks*, that they may seem tall, or, as thinking nobody good enough to speak to them or to receive a look or a smile from them. Their eyes are wanton, *deceiving* (so the word is); with their amorous glances they draw men into their snares. They affect a formal starched way of going, that people may look at them, and admire them, and know they have been at the dancing-school, and have learned the minuet-step. They go *mincing*, or nicely tripping, not willing to set so much as the sole of their foot to the ground, for tenderness and delicacy. They make a *tinkling with their feet*, having, as some think, chains, or little bells, upon their shoes, that made a noise: they go *as if they were fettered* (so some read it), like a horse tramelled, that he may learn to pace. Thus Agag came delicately, ^{<5392>}1 Samuel 15:32. Such a nice affected mien is not only a force upon that which is natural, and ridiculous before men, men of sense; but as it is an evidence of a vain mind, it is offensive to God. And two things aggravated it here:

1. That these were the daughters of Zion, the holy mountain, who should have behaved with the gravity that becomes women professing godliness.

2. That it should seem, by the connexion, they were the wives and daughters of the princes who spoiled and oppressed the poor (v. 14, 15) that they might maintain the pride and luxury of their families.

II. The punishments threatened for this sin; and they answer the sin as face answers to face in a glass, v. 17, 18.

1. They *walked with stretched-forth necks*, but God will *smite with a scab the crown of their head*, which shall lower their crests, and make them ashamed to show their heads, being obliged by it to cut off their hair. Note, Loathsome diseases are often sent as the just punishment of pride, and are sometimes the immediate effect of lewdness, the flesh and the body being consumed by it.

2. They cared not what they laid out in furnishing themselves with great variety of fine clothes; but God will reduce them to such poverty and distress that they shall not have clothes sufficient to cover their nakedness, but their uncomeliness shall be exposed through their rags.

3. They were extremely fond and proud of their ornaments; but God will strip them of those ornaments, when their houses shall be plundered, their treasures rifled, and they themselves led into captivity. The prophet here specifies many of the ornaments which they used as particularly as if he had been the keeper of their wardrobe or had attended them in their dressing-room. It is not at all material to enquire what sort of ornaments these respectively were and whether the translations rightly express the original words; perhaps 100 years hence the names of some of the ornaments that are now in use in our own land will be as little understood as some of those here mentioned now are. Fashions alter, and so do the names of them; and yet the mention of them is not in vain, but is designed to expose the folly of the daughters of Zion; for,

(1.) Many of these things, we may suppose, were very odd and ridiculous, and, if they had not been in fashion, would have been hooted at. They were fitter to be toys for children to play with than ornaments for grown people to go to Mount Zion in.

(2.) Those things that were decent and convenient, as *the linen, the hoods, and the veils*, needed not be provided in such abundance and variety. It is

necessary to have apparel and proper that all should have it according to their rank; but what occasion was there for so many changeable suits of apparel (v. 22), that they might not be seen two days together in the same suit? “They must have (as the homily against excess of apparel speaks) one gown for the day, another for the night — one long, another short — one for the working day, another for the holy-day — one of this colour, another of that colour — one of cloth, another of silk or damask — one dress afore dinner, another after — one of the Spanish fashion, another Turkey — and never content with sufficient.” All this, as it is an evidence of pride and vain curiosity, so must needs spend a great deal in gratifying a base lust that ought to be laid out in works of piety and charity; and it is well if poor tenants be not racked, or poor creditors defrauded to support it.

(3.) The enumeration of these things intimates what care they were in about them, how much their hearts were upon them, what an exact account they kept of them, how nice and critical they were about them, how insatiable their desire was of them, and how much of their comfort was bound up in them. A maid could forget none of these ornaments, though they were ever so many (²⁴¹²Jeremiah 2:32), but they would report them as readily, and talk of them with as much pleasure, as if they had been things of the greatest moment. The prophet did not speak of these things as in themselves sinful (they might lawfully be had and used), but as things which they were proud of and should therefore be deprived of.

III. They were very nice and curious about their clothes; but God would make those bodies of theirs, which were at such expense to beautify and make easy, a reproach and burden to them (v. 24): *Instead of sweet smell* (those tablets, or boxes, of perfume, *houses of the soul* or *breath*, as they are called, v. 20, *margin*) *there shall be stink*, garments grown filthy with being long worn, or from some loathsome disease or plasters for the cure of it. *Instead of a rich embroidered girdle* used to make the clothes sit tight, there shall be *a rent*, a rending of the clothes for grief, or old rotten clothes rent into rags. *Instead of well-set hair*, curiously plaited and powdered, there shall be *baldness*, the hair being plucked off or shaven, as was usual in times of great affliction (²⁴¹³Isaiah 15:2; ²⁴¹⁶Jeremiah 16:6), or in great servitude, ²⁴¹⁸Ezekiel 29:18. *Instead of a stomacher*, or a scarf or sash, there shall be *a girding of sackcloth*, in token of deep humiliation; *and burning instead of beauty*. Those that had a good complexion, and were proud of it, when they are carried into captivity shall be tanned and

sun-burnt; and it is observed that the best faces are soonest injured by the weather. From all this let us learn,

1. Not to be nice and curious about our apparel, not to affect that which is gay and costly, nor to be proud of it.

2. Not to be secure in the enjoyment of any of the delights of sense, because we know not how soon we may be stripped of them, nor what straits we may be reduced to.

IV. They designed by these ornaments to charm the gentlemen, and win their affections (^{<3076>}Proverbs 7:16, 17), but there shall be none to be charmed by them (v. 25): *Thy men shall fall by the sword, and the mighty in the war, The fire shall consume them, and then the maidens shall not be given in marriage*; as it is, ^{<3086>}Psalm 78:63. When the sword comes with commission the mighty commonly fall first by it, because they are most forward to venture. And, when Zion's guards are cut off, no marvel that Zion's gates *lament and mourn* (v. 26), the enemies having made themselves masters of them; and the city itself, being desolate, being emptied or swept, shall *sit upon the ground* like a disconsolate widow. If sin be harboured within the walls, lamentation and mourning are near the gates.