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COMMENTARIES

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS LAMENTATIONS

by John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
— Psalm 60:4*

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INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS

This book very properly follows the prophecy of Jeremiah, not only because wrote by him, but because of the subject matter of it, the deplorable case of the Jews upon the destruction of their city; and has been reckoned indeed as making one book with it; so Dean Prideaux^{f1} supposes it was reckoned by Josephus^{f2}, according to the number of the books of the Old Testament, which he gives; but it does not stand in this order in all printed Hebrew Bibles, especially in those published by the Jews; where it is placed in the Hagiographa, and among the five Megilloth; or with the books of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song, read at their festivals, as this on their public fast, on the ninth of Ab, for the destruction of their city; because they fancy it was not written by the gift of prophecy, but by the Holy Ghost, between which they make a distinction; and therefore remove it from the prophets; but this is the most natural place for it. It is sometimes called by the Jews "Echa", from the first word of it, which signifies "how"; and sometimes "Kinoth", "Lamentations", from the subject of it; and so by the Septuagint version "Threni", which signifies the same; and which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, and others, and by us. That Jeremiah was the writer of it is not questioned; nor is the divine authority of it doubted of. The precise place and time where and when he wrote it is not certain: some say he wrote it in a cave or den near Jerusalem; and Adrichomius^{f3} makes mention of a place, called

"the Prophet Jeremiah's pit, where he sat in the bitterness of his soul, grieving and weeping; and lamented and described the destruction of Jerusalem made by the Chaldeans, in a fourfold alphabet in metre; where Helena the empress, according to Nicephorus, built some wonderful works;"

but it rather seems that he wrote these Lamentations after he was carried away with the rest of the captives to Ramah, and dismissed to Mizpah, at one or other of these places. It is written in Hebrew metre, though now little understood; and the first four chapters in an alphabetical manner; every verse beginning in order with the letters of the alphabet; and in the third chapter it is done three times over; three verses together beginning with the same letter: this seems to be done to make it more agreeable, and to help the memory. Jarchi thinks that this is the same book, which, having

been publicly read by Baruch, was cut to pieces by King Jehoiakim, and cast into the fire ^{f4} and burnt; which consisted of the first, second, and fourth chapters, and to which was afterwards added the third chapter; but it is without any reason or foundation; seeing that contained all Jeremiah's prophecies, not only against Israel and Judah, but against all the nations, (~~2431D~~ Jeremiah 32:2); which this book has nothing of; nor even the words, which are particularly said to be in that, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, (~~2432D~~ Jeremiah 32:29); Josephus ^{f5} seems to have been of opinion that this book of Lamentations was written by Jeremy on account of the death of Josiah, (~~44875~~ 2 Chronicles 35:25); and in which he is followed by many; but the lamentation made in this book is not for a single person only, but for a city, and even for the whole nation of the Jews; nor is there anything suitable to Josiah, and his case; what seems most plausible is in (~~25010~~ Lamentations 4:20); and that better agrees with Zedekiah than with him. It appears plainly to be written after the destruction of the city and temple, and the sad desolation made in the land of Judea, because of the sins of the priests and people; and the design of it is to lament these things; to bring them to repentance and humiliation for their sins, and to give some comfortable hope that God will be merciful to them, and restore them again to their former privileges, for which the prophet prays. The introduction to it, in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, is,

“and it came to pass after Israel was carried captive, and Jerusalem laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping, and delivered out this lamentation over Jerusalem; and said,”

what follows.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 1

This chapter contains a complaint of the miseries of the city of Jerusalem, and the nation of the Jews; first by the Prophet Jeremiah, then by the Jewish people; and is concluded with a prayer of theirs. The prophet deplores the state of the city, now depopulated and become tributary, which had been full of people, and ruled over others; but now in a very mournful condition, and forsaken and ill used by her lovers and friends, turned her enemies, (~~2000~~Lamentations 1:1,2); and next the state of the whole nation; being carried captive for their sins among the Heathens; having no rest, being overtaken by their persecutors, (~~2000~~Lamentations 1:3); but what most of all afflicted him was the state of Zion; her ways mourning; her solemn feasts neglected; her gates desolate; her priests sighing, and virgins afflicted; her adversaries prosperous; her beauty departed; her sabbaths mocked; her nakedness seen; and all her pleasant things in the sanctuary seized on by the adversary; and all this because of her many transgressions, grievous sins, and great pollution and vileness, which are confessed, (~~2000~~Lamentations 1:4-11); then the people themselves, or the prophet representing them, lament their case, and call upon others to sympathize with them, (~~2002~~Lamentations 1:12); observing the sad desolation made by the hand of the Lord upon them for their iniquities, (~~2003~~Lamentations 1:13-15); on account of which great sorrow is expressed; and their case is represented as the more distressing, that they had no comforter, (~~2006~~Lamentations 1:16,17); then follows a prayer to God, in which his righteousness in doing or suffering all this is acknowledged, and mercy is entreated for themselves, and judgments on their enemies, (~~2008~~Lamentations 1:18-22).

Ver. 1. *How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!* etc.] These are the words of Jeremiah; so the Targum introduces them,

“Jeremiah the prophet and high priest said;”

and began thus, “how”; not inquiring the reasons of this distress and ruin; but as amazed and astonished at it; and commiserating the sad case of the

city of Jerusalem, which a little time ago was exceeding populous; had thousands of inhabitants in it; besides those that came from other parts to see it, or trade with it: and especially when the king of Babylon had invaded the land, which drove vast numbers to Jerusalem for safety; and which was the case afterwards when besieged by the Romans; at which time, as Josephus^{f6} relates, there were eleven hundred thousand persons; and very probably a like number was in it before the destruction of it by the Chaldeans, who all perished through famine, pestilence, and the sword; or were carried captive; or made their escape; so that the city, as was foretold it should, came to be without any inhabitant; and therefore is represented as “sitting”, which is the posture of mourners; and as “solitary”, or “alone”^{f7}, like a menstruous woman in her separation, to which it is compared, (~~2017~~ Lamentations 1:17); or as a leper removed from the society of men; so the Targum,

“as a man that has the plague of leprosy on his flesh, that dwells alone;”

or rather as a woman deprived of her husband and children; as follows:

[how] is she become as a widow! her king, that was her head and husband, being taken from her, and carried captive; and God, who was the husband also of the Jewish people, having departed from them, and so left in a state of widowhood. Jarchi^{f8} observes, that it is not said a widow simply, but as a widow, because her husband would return again; and therefore only during this state of captivity she was like one; but Broughton takes the “caph” not to be a note of similitude, but of reality; and renders it, “she is become a very widow”. Vespasian, when he had conquered Judea, struck a medal, on one side of which was a woman sitting under a palm tree in a plaintive and pensive posture, with this inscription, “Judea Capta”, as Grotius observes:

she [that was] great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, [how] is she become tributary! that ruled over many nations, having subdued them, and to whom they paid tribute, as the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, in the times of David and Solomon; but since obliged to pay tribute herself, first to Pharaohnecho, king of Egypt; then to the king of Babylon in the times of Jehoiakim; and last of all in the times of Zedekiah; so the Targum,

“she that was great among the people, and ruled over the provinces that paid tribute to her, returns to be depressed; and after this to give tribute to them.”

Ver. 2. *She weepeth sore in the night*, etc.] Or, “weeping weeps”^{f9}; two weepings, one for the first, the other for the second temples^{f10}; and while others are taking their sleep and rest; a season fit for mourners, when they can give their grief the greater vent, without any interruption from others; and it being now a night of affliction with her, which occasioned this sore weeping. Jarchi observes, that it was in the night that the temple was burnt:

and her tears [are] on her cheeks; continue there, being always flowing, and never wholly dried up; which shows how great her grief was, and that her weeping was without intermission; or otherwise tears do not lie long, but are soon dried up, or wiped off:

among all her lovers she hath none to comfort [her]; as the Assyrians formerly were, (²³²⁵Ezekiel 23:5,9,12); and more lately the Egyptians her allies and confederates, in whom she trusted; but these gave her no assistance; nor yielded her any relief in her distress; nor so much as spoke one word of comfort to her:

all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies; those who pretended great friendship to her, and were in strict alliance with her, acted the treacherous part, and withdrew from her, leaving her to the common enemy; and not only so, but behaved towards her in a hostile manner themselves; for “the children of Noph and Tahapanes”, places in Egypt confederate with the Jews, are said to “have broken the crown of their head”, (²⁴²⁶Jeremiah 2:16). The Targum interprets the “lovers” of the “idols” she loved to follow, who now could be of no use unto her by way of comfort.

Ver. 3. *Judah is gone into captivity*, etc.] Not only Jerusalem the metropolis of Judea was destroyed, but the whole country was ravaged, and the inhabitants of it carried captive into Babylon:

because of affliction, and because of great servitude; because of their sins in oppressing and afflicting their poor brethren, and retaining them in a state of bondage after their seven years’ servitude, contrary to the law of God; for which they were threatened with captivity, (²⁸⁴³Jeremiah 34:13-22); so the Targum,

“the house of Judah went into captivity, because they afflicted the fatherless and the widows; and because of the multitude of service which they caused their brethren the children of Israel to serve, who were sold unto them; and they did not proclaim liberty to their servants and maidens, who were of the seed of Israel:”

or, “through affliction, and through great servitude”^{f11}; that is, through the affliction and servitude they suffered by the Chaldeans, into whose hands they fell; though some understand it of the Jews, who, to escape the affliction and servitude of the Chaldeans, went into a kind of voluntary captivity, fleeing to the countries of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, during the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; (see ^{<441>}Jeremiah 40:11,12);

she dwelleth among the Heathen; the uncircumcised and the unclean; and so was deprived of both her civil and religious liberties; having no opportunity of worshipping God, and enjoying him in his courts, as formerly; and which must be very uncomfortable living, especially to those who were truly gracious:

she findeth no rest. The Targum adds,

“because of the hard service to which they subjected her;”

she found no natural rest, being carried from place to place; nor civil rest, being kept in hard bondage; nor spiritual rest, being deprived of the worship and ordinances of God; and being conscious of her sins, which had brought all this misery on her:

all her persecutors overtook her between the straits; having hunted her as men hunt wild beasts, and get them into some strait and difficult place, and then seize on them. The Targum interprets it, between the borders; or between the hedges, as Ben Melech; and so Jarchi, of the borders of a field and vineyard; and of a ditch on the one side and the other, that there is no room to escape; and who makes mention of a Midrash, that explains it not of place, but time, between the seventeenth day of Tammuz, and the ninth of Ab; (see ^{<451>}Jeremiah 52:7,8).

Ver. 4. *The ways of Zion do mourn*, etc.] Being unoccupied, as in (^{<461>}Judges 5:6); or unfrequented: this is said by a rhetorical figure; as ways may be said to rejoice, or look pleasant and cheerful, when there are many passengers in them, going to and fro; so they may be said to mourn, or to look dull and melancholy, when no person is met with, or seen in them;

thus Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed, the ways which led from the one to the other, and in which used to be seen great numbers going up to the worship of God, which was pleasant to behold, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 42:4); now not one walking in them, and all overgrown with grass; and those roads which led from the several parts of the land to Jerusalem, whither the ten tribes went up to worship three times in the year, and used to travel in companies, which made it delightful and comfortable, and pleasant to look at, now none to be seen upon them; which was matter of grief to those that wished well to Zion; as it is to all truly godly persons to observe that the ways and worship of God are not frequented; that there are few inquiring the way to Zion above, or travelling in the road to heaven; as also when there are few that worship God in Zion below, or ask the way unto it, or walk in the ordinances of it:

because none come to the solemn feasts. Aben Ezra understands this of the sanctuary itself; which sense Abendana mentions; expressed by the word here used; and so called, because all Israel were convened here; but the Targum and Jarchi more rightly interpret it of the feasts, the three solemn feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at which all the males in Israel were obliged to appear; but now, the temple and city being in ruins, none came to them, which was a very distressing case; as it is to good men, when upon whatever occasion, either through persecution, or through sloth and negligence, the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances, particularly the Lord's supper, the solemn feasts under the Gospel dispensation, are not attended to:

all her gates are desolate; the gates of the temple; none passing through them into it to worship God, pray unto him, praise him, or offer sacrifice; or the gates of the city, none going to and fro in them; nor the elders sitting there in council, as in courts of judicature, to try causes, and do justice and judgment:

her priests sigh; the temple burnt; altars destroyed, and no sacrifices brought to be offered; and so no employment for them, and consequently no bread; but utterly deprived of their livelihood, and had good reason to sigh. The Targum adds,

“because the offerings ceased:”

her virgins are afflicted; or, “are sorrowful”^{f12}; are in grief and mourning, that used to be brisk and gay, and to play with timbrels at their festivals; so the Targum paraphrases it,

“the virgins mourn because they cease to go out on the fifteenth of Ab, and on the day of atonement, which was the tenth of Tisri, to dance in the dances:”

and she [is] in bitterness; that is, Zion; or the congregation of Israel is in bitterness of spirit, in great affliction and distress; her name might be rightly called Marah; (see ^(~~Exod~~)Ruth 1:20).

Ver. 5. *Her adversaries are the chief*, etc.] Or, “for the head”^{f13}; or are the head, as was threatened, (^(~~Exod~~)Deuteronomy 28:44); and now fulfilled; the Chaldeans having got the dominion over the Jews, and obliged them to be subject to them:

her enemies prosper; in wealth and riches, in grandeur and glory; live in ease and tranquillity, enjoying all outward felicity and happiness; while Zion was in distress; which was an aggravation of it; and yet this was but righteous judgment:

for the Lord hath afflicted her; who is righteous in all his ways: the Chaldeans were but instruments; the evil was from the Lord, according to his will and righteous determination, as appears by what follows:

for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy; that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea were carried captive by the enemy, and drove before them as a flock of sheep, and that for the sins of the nation; and these not a few, but were very numerous, as Mordecai and Ezekiel, and others, who were carried captive young with Jeconiah, as well as many now.

Ver. 6. *And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed*, etc.] The kingdom removed; the priesthood ceased; the temple, their beautiful house, burnt; the palaces of their king and nobles demolished; and everything in church and state that was glorious were now no more:

her princes are become like harts [that] find no pasture; that are heartless and without courage, fearful and timorous, as harts are, especially when destitute of food. The Targum is

“her princes run about for food, as harts run about in the wilderness, and find no place fit for pasture:”

and they are gone without strength before the pursuer; having no spirit nor courage to oppose the enemy, nor strength to flee from him, they fell into his hands, and so were carried captive; (see ²⁶¹⁸Jeremiah 52:8-10). Jarchi observes, that the word for “pursuer” has here all its letters, and nowhere else; and so denotes the full pursuit of the enemy, and the complete victory obtained by him.

Ver. 7. *Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries*, etc.] When carried captive, and in exile in a foreign land; when surrounded with distresses and calamities of various kinds; which are a means sometimes of rubbing up and refreshing the memories of persons with those good things they take little notice of in the times of prosperity; the worth of such things being best known and prized by the want of them: even

all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old; her civil and religious liberties; the word, worship, and ordinances of God; the temple, altars, and courts of the Lord; the ark of the testimony, the symbol of the divine Presence; and the revelation of the will of God by the prophets; their peace, prosperity, and enjoyment of all good things: these were remembered

when her people fell into the hand of the enemy; the Chaldeans. The Targum is,

“into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked, and he oppressed them:”

and none did help her; not the Egyptians, her allies and confederates, in whom she trusted:

her adversaries saw her, [and] did mock at her sabbaths; as the Heathens used to do; calling the Jews Sabbatarians ^{f14}; by way of derision; representing them as an idle lazy people, who observed a seventh day merely out of sloth, and so lost a seventh part of time ^{f15}; or they mocked at them for keeping them in vain; since, notwithstanding their religious observance of them, they were suffered to be carried captive out of their land; or, as Jarchi thinks, the Chaldeans mocked at them for keeping their sabbaths strictly, now they were in other lands, when they neglected them

in their own country; or they jeered them with their weekly and yearly sabbaths; suggesting to them that now they had leisure enough to observe them; and that their land ceased from tillage with a witness now: some think, that because of the observance of a sabbath, they were obliged to by their law, therefore the Heathens made them work the harder, and imposed greater tasks upon them on that day than on others, like the Egyptians of old; though the words may be rendered, “they mocked at her cessations”^{f16}; from joy and pleasure, peace and comfort, and the enjoyment of all good things; so the Targum,

“the enemies saw her when she went into captivity; and they mocked at the good things which ceased out of the midst of her.”

Ver. 8. *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned*, etc.] Or, “hath sinned a sin”^{f17}; a great sin, as the Targum; the sin of idolatry, according to some; or of covenant breaking, as others; though perhaps no particular sin is meant, but many grievous sins; since she was guilty of a multitude of them, as in (~~2015~~ Lamentations 1:5);

therefore she is removed; out of her own land, and carried captive into another: or, is “for commotion”^{f18}; for scorn and derision; the head being moved and shook at her by way of contempt: or rather, “for separation”^{f19}; she being like a menstruous woman, defiled and separate from society:

all that honoured her despise her; they that courted her friendship and alliance in the time of her prosperity, as the Egyptians, now neglected her, and treated her with the utmost contempt, being in adversity:

because they have seen her nakedness; being stripped of all her good things she before enjoyed; and both her weakness and her wickedness being exposed to public view. The allusion is either to harlots, or rather to modest women, when taken captive, whose nakedness is uncovered by the brutish and inhuman soldiers:

yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward; being covered with shame, because of the ill usage of her, as modest women will, being so used.

Ver. 9. *Her filthiness [is] in her skirts*, etc.] Her sin is manifest to all, being to be seen in her punishment. The allusion is to a menstruous woman, to whom she is compared, both before and after; whose blood flows down to the skirts of her garments, and there seen; by which it is known that she is in her separation. So the Targum,

“the filthiness of the blood of her separation is in her skirts; she is not cleansed from it, nor does she repent of her sins.”

she remembereth not her last end; she did not consider in the time of her prosperity what her sins would bring her to; what would be the issue of them; nay, though she was warned by the prophet, and was told what things would come to at last, yet she laid it not to heart; nor did she lay it up in her mind, or reflect upon it; but went on in her sinful courses:

therefore she came down wonderfully; or, “with wonders” ^{f20}; from a very exalted estate to a very low one; from the height of honour and prosperity to the depth of distress and misery; to the astonishment and wonder of all about her, that so flourishing a city and kingdom should be brought to ruin at once, in so strange a manner; (see ~~2007~~ Daniel 8:24);

she had no comforter; as none to help her against her enemies, (²⁰⁰⁷ Lamentations 1:7); and to prevent her ruin; so none to pity her, and have compassion upon her, and speak a comfortable word to her now she was in it:

O Lord, behold my affliction: not with his eye of omniscience only, which he did, and, of which she had no doubt; but with an eye of pity and compassion: thus Zion is at once and suddenly introduced, breaking out in this pathetic manner, being in great affliction and distress, having none else to apply to; and the enemy bearing hard upon her, and behaving in a very insolent and audacious manner, transgressing all bounds of humanity and decency; and therefore hoped the Lord would have compassion on her, though she had sinned against him:

for the enemy hath magnified [himself]; behaved haughtily both against God and his people; attributing great things to himself; magnifying his own power and wisdom.

Ver. 10. *The enemy hath spread out his hands on all her pleasant things*, etc.] Meaning not the wealth and riches, the goods and substance, or the rich furniture in their own houses; but the precious things in the house of God, the ark, the table, the altar, the priests garments, and vessels of the sanctuary, and the gifts of the temple, and everything valuable in it; these the enemy stretched out his hands and seized upon, and claimed them as his own; took them as a booty, prey, and plunder. Jarchi ^{f21} interprets the enemy of the Moabites and Ammonites, who seized upon the books of the law, in which are things more desirable than gold and silver, and burnt

them; because there was a law in them that forbid them entering into the congregation of Israel; but the Targum better explains it of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked; for he and the Chaldean army are doubtless meant; who plundered and ransacked the temple of all its pleasant, precious, and valuable things:

for she hath seen [that] the Heathen entered into her sanctuary; not into the land of Israel only, the holy land; but into the temple, the sanctuary of the Lord; but called hers, because it was built for her use, that the congregation of Israel might worship the Lord in it; into this with her own eyes, though forced to it, and sore against her will, and to her great grief and trouble, she saw the Chaldeans enter, and ravage and spoil it:

whom thou didst command [that] they should not enter into thy congregation; these Jarchi interprets of the Moabites and Ammonites again; and so does the Targum here; paraphrasing them thus,

“whom thou didst command by the hand of Moses the prophet, concerning Ammon and Moab, that they were not worthy to enter into thy congregation;”

and concerning whom there is an express law forbidding it, (^{<2016>}Deuteronomy 23:1-3); and it may be there were Moabites and Ammonites in the Chaldean army, assisting in the taking of Jerusalem; and who entered into the temple when it was taken.

Ver. 11. *All her people sigh*, etc.] Not her priests only, (^{<2016>}Lamentations 1:4); but all the common people, because of their affliction, particularly for want of bread. So the Targum,

“all the people of Jerusalem sigh because of the famine;”

for it follows:

they seek bread; to eat, as the Targum; inquire where it is to be had, but in vain:

they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: or, “to cause the soul to return”^{f22}; to fetch it back when fainting and swooning away through famine; and therefore would give anything for food; part with their rich clothes, jewels, and precious stones; with whatsoever they had that was valuable in their cabinets or coffer, that they might have meat

to keep from fainting and dying; to refresh and recruit their spirits spent with hunger:

see, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile; mean, base, and contemptible, in the eyes of men, through penury and want of food; through poverty, affliction, and distress; and therefore desires the Lord would consider her case, and look with pity and compassion on her.

Ver. 12. [*Is it* *nothing to you, all ye that pass by*? etc.] O ye strangers and travellers that pass by, and see my distress, does it not at all concern you? does it not in the least affect you? can you look upon it, and have no commiseration? or is there nothing to be learned from hence by you, that may be instructive and useful to you? Some consider the words as deprecating; may the like things never befall you that have befallen me, O ye passengers; be ye who ye will; I can never wish the greatest stranger, much less a friend, to suffer what I do; nay, I pray God they never may: others, as adjuring. So the Targum,

“I adjure you, all ye that pass by the way, turn aside hither:”

or as calling; so the words may be rendered, “O all ye that pass by”^{f23}; and Sanctius thinks it is an allusion to epitaphs on tombs, which call upon travellers to stop and read the character of the deceased; what were his troubles, and how he came to his end; and so what follows is Jerusalem’s epitaph:

behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; as it is natural for everyone to think their own affliction greatest, and that none have that occasion of grief and sorrow as they have; though there is no affliction befalls us but what is common unto men; and when it comes to be compared with others, perhaps will appear lighter than theirs:

wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger; signifying, that her affliction was not a common one; it was not from the hand of man only, but from the hand of God; and not in the ordinary way of his providence; but as the effect of his wrath and fury, in all the fierceness of it.

Ver. 13. *From above hath he sent fire into my bones*, etc.] Which the Targum interprets of her fortified cities, towns, or castles; as Jerusalem, more especially the temple, and the palaces of the king and nobles in it; which, though burnt by the fire of the Chaldeans, yet, this being according

to the determination and by the direction of the Lord, is said to be sent from above, from heaven; so that they seemed to be as it were struck with lightning from heaven; unless it should be thought rather to be understood of the fire of divine wrath, of which the people of the Jews had a quick sense, and was like a burning fever in them:

and it prevails against them; or “it” ^{f24}; that is, the fire prevails against or rules over everyone of the bones, to the consumption of them: or rather, “he rules over it” ^{f25}; that is, God rules over the fire; directs it, and disposes of it, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, to the destruction of the strength of the Jewish nation:

he hath spread a net for my feet; in which she was entangled, so that she could not flee from the fire, and escape it, if she would. The allusion is to the taking of birds and wild beasts in nets; if God had not spread a net for the Jews, the Chaldeans could never have taken them; (see ^{<423>}Ezekiel 12:13 ^{<407>}Hosea 7:12);

he hath turned me back; her feet being taken in the net, she could not go forward, but was obliged to turn back, or continue in the net, not being able to extricate her feet: or, “turned me upon my back”; as the Arabic version; laid me prostrate, and so an easy prey to the enemy; or, as the Targum,

“he hath caused me to turn the back to mine enemies.”

he hath made me desolate [and] faint all the day; the cities being without inhabitants; the land uncultivated; the state in a sickly and languishing condition; and which continued so to the end of the seventy years’ captivity.

Ver. 14. *The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand*, etc.] That is, the punishment of her sins was laid upon her by the Lord himself; his hand was in it; it came from him; the Chaldeans were only instruments; and a heavy yoke this was. So the Targum renders it,

“the yoke of my rebellions is made heavy by his hand.”

they are wreathed, [and] come upon my neck; or, “twisted together” ^{f26}; as lines to make a cord; or as several cords to make a rope; or as branches of trees or withes are implicated and entwined; and so the Targum,

“they are twisted together as the branches of a vine.”

It denotes the complication of judgments upon the Jewish nation for their sins, with which they were holden as with cords; and which were like ropes about their necks, very heavy and distressing to them, and from which they could not deliver themselves. Mr. Broughton thinks the apostle has reference to this passage; and explains it by the sin that easily besets, or cunningly wraps about, (~~scribes~~ Hebrews 12:1);

he hath made my strength to fall; by the weight of punishment laid upon her, which she could not stand up under, but sunk and fell: this may be understood of her strong and mighty men; her men of valour and courage, who yet stumbled and fell:

the Lord hath delivered me into [their] hands, [from whom] I am not able to rise up; meaning the Chaldeans; nor were the Jews at last delivered from them by their own strength, but by the means of Cyrus the Persian conquering Babylon.

Ver. 15. *The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty [men] in the midst of me*, etc.] As a causeway is trodden; or as mire is trodden under foot in the streets; so were the mighty and valiant men, the soldiers and men of war, trodden under foot and destroyed by the Chaldeans in the streets of Jerusalem, and in the midst of Judea; the Lord so permitting it:

he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the army of the Chaldeans, which were brought against Jerusalem by a divine appointment and call; against whom the choicest and stoutest of them, even their young men, could not stand; but were crushed and broken to pieces by them. The word for “assembly” sometimes signifies an appointed time; a time fixed for solemn festivals, and for calling the people to them; and so the Targum here,

“he hath called or appointed a time to break the strength of my young men;”

the time of Jerusalem’s destruction by the Babylonians:

the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, [as] in a winepress; in the winepress of his wrath; or however in the winepress of the Babylonians, who are compared to one; into whose hands the Jews falling, were like grapes cast into a winepress, and there trodden by men, in order to squeeze and get out the wine; and in like manner were their blood squeezed out of them and shed. The Targum interprets it of the blood of

virginity being poured out, as wine in a press; the virgins of Judah being ravished and defiled by the enemy.

Ver. 16. *For these [things] I weep*, etc.] The congregation of Judah, the godly among them, particularly Jeremiah, who represented them, wept for the sins the people had been guilty of, and for the punishment inflicted on them, or the sore calamities that were brought upon them. The Targum goes into particulars, and paraphrases it thus,

“for the little ones that are dashed in pieces, and for the women big with child, whose bellies are ripped up, the congregation of Israel saith, I weep:”

mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water: which doubling of the words seems to express the vehemency of her passion; the greatness of the grief she was overwhelmed with. The Targum is,

“my both eyes flow with tears as a fountain of water:”

because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me; meaning God himself, who is the principal comforter of his people: saints may be comforters of one another, by relating to each other their gracious experiences; praying with one another, and building up each other in their most holy faith; by behaving in a kind, tender, and loving manner to each other; forgiving mutual offences; and conversing together about the glories of heaven, and being for ever with the Lord; but these sometimes are at a distance; or, like Job’s friends, are miserable comforters. Ministers of the Gospel are by their character and office “Barnabases”, “sons of consolation”; are trained up, appointed, and sent by the Lord to comfort his people; which they do by preaching the Gospel to them purely; by opening the Scriptures of truth clearly; by administering ordinances faithfully, and in all directing to Christ: but these sometimes are removed afar off by persecution or death; or those who bear this name do not perform their work aright. God is the chief comforter of his people; God, Father, Son, and Spirit: the Father comforts with his gracious presence; with views of covenant interest, and of the firmness and stability of it; with the precious promises of the word; with his everlasting and unchangeable love; and with discoveries of his pardoning grace and mercy. The Son is a comforter; one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews ^{f27} is “Menachem”, “the Comforter”; and who they say is here meant; and he is called the Consolation of Israel, (^{q125} Luke 2:25); who comforts by bringing

near his righteousness and salvation; by his peace speaking blood, and atoning sacrifice; by directing to his fulness, and favouring with his presence. And the Holy Spirit is another comforter; who comforts by taking of the things of God, Christ, and the Gospel, and showing them to the saints; by opening and applying the promises to his people; by being the spirit of adoption, and the seal, earnest, and pledge of eternal glory: and thus, by being a comforter, the Lord “relieves the souls” of his people, under the weight of sin, the temptations of Satan, and the various afflictions of life; and prevents their fainting, and returns their souls, as the word ^{f28} signifies; or fetches them back, when fainting and swooning away: but sometimes he withdraws himself, and stands at a distance, at least in their apprehensions; and this is matter of great grief and sorrow to them; which was the case of the church at this time:

my children are desolate: those which should help and relieve her, and be a comfort to her, were destitute themselves: or, were “destroyed” ^{f29}, and were not; and which was the cause of her disconsolate state, as was Rachel’s, (²⁸¹⁵Jeremiah 31:15);

because the enemy prevailed; that is, over them, as the Targum adds; over her children; and either put them to death or carried them captive.

Ver. 17. *Zion spreadeth forth her hands*, etc.] Either as submitting to the conqueror, and imploring mercy; or rather as calling to her friends to help and relieve her. The Targum is,

“Zion spreadeth out her hands through distress, as a woman spreads out her hands upon the seat to bring forth;”

(see ²⁴⁶¹Jeremiah 4:31). Some render the words, “Zion breaks with her hands” ^{f30}; that is, breaks bread; and Joseph Kimchi observes, that it was the custom of comforters to break bread to the mourner; but here she herself breaks it with her hands, because there was none to comfort her:

[and there is] none to comfort her; to speak a word of comfort to her, or to help her out of her trouble; her children gone into captivity; her friends and lovers at a distance; and God himself departed from her; (see Gill on ²⁸¹⁶Lamentations 1:16”);

the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, [that] his adversaries [should be] round about him; that he should be surrounded by them, and carried captive, and should be in the midst of them in captivity: this was the

decree and determination of God; and, agreeably to it, he ordered it in his providence that the Chaldeans should come against him, encompass him, and overcome him; and that because he had slighted and broken the commandments of the Lord; and therefore was justly dealt with, as is acknowledged in (²⁰¹⁸ Lamentations 1:18). So the Targum,

“the Lord gave to the house of Jacob commandments, and a law to keep, but they transgressed the decree of his word; therefore his enemies encompassed the house of Jacob round about.”

Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them; reckoned filthy and unclean, abominable and nauseous; whom none cared to come near, but shunned, despised, and abhorred; as the Jews separated from the Gentiles, and would not converse with them; so neither now would the Chaldeans with the Jews; but treat them as the offscouring of all things.

Ver. 18. *The Lord is righteous*, etc.] Or, “righteous [is] he the Lord”^{f31}; in all these dispensations of his providence, how afflictive and severe soever they may seem to be; however the enemies of the church and people of God might transgress just bounds, and act the cruel and unrighteous part; yet good men will always own that God is righteous in all his ways, and that there is no unrighteousness in him; though they sometimes know not how to reconcile his providences to his promises, and especially to his declared love and affection to them; (see ²⁴¹¹ Jeremiah 12:1); the reason, clearing God of all injustice, follows:

for I have rebelled against his commandment; or, “his mouth”^{f32}: the word of his mouth, which he delivered by word of mouth at Mount Sinai, or by his prophets since; and therefore was righteously dealt with, and justly chastised. The Targum makes these to be the words of Josiah before his death, owning he had done wrong in going out against Pharaohnecho, contrary to the word of the Lord; and the next clause to be the lamentation of Jeremiah upon his death: though they are manifestly the words of Jerusalem or Zion, whom the prophet personates, saying,

hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow; directing herself to all compassionate persons, to hearken and attend to her mournful complaint, and to consider her sorrow, the nature and cause of it, and look upon her with an eye of pity in her sorrowful circumstances:

my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity; in Babylon; being taken and carried thither by the Chaldeans; had it been only her ancient

men and women, persons worn out with age, that could have been of little use, and at most but of a short continuance, the affliction had not been so great; but her virgins and young men, the flower of the nation, and by whom it might have been supported and increased; for these to be carried away into a strange land must be matter of grief and sorrow.

Ver. 19. *I called for my lovers, [but] they deceived me*, etc.] Either her idols, with whom she had committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; but these could not answer her expectations, and help her: or the Egyptians, that courted her friendship, and with whom she was in alliance, and in whom she trusted; and these, in the times of her distress, she called upon to make good their engagements, but they disappointed her, and stood not to their covenant and promises, but left her to stand and fall by herself; this Jerusalem said, according to the Targum, when she was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; but these words, “they deceived me”, it makes to be the Romans, that came with Titus and Vespasian, and built bulwarks against Jerusalem:

my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city; or died in the city of Jerusalem; not by the sword of the enemy, but through famine; and so, in the Arabic language, the word <Arabic>^{f33} signifies to labour under famine, and want of food, and perish through it; and if this was the case of their priests that officiated in holy things, and of their elders or civil magistrates, what must be the case of the common people?

while they sought their meat to relieve their souls; or “fetch^{f34} [them] back”; which were just fainting and dying away through hunger; and who did expire while they were begging their bread, or inquiring in one place after another where they could get any, either freely or for money.

Ver. 20. *Behold, O Lord, for I [am] in distress*, etc.] Thus she turns from one to another; sometimes she addresses strangers, people that pass by; sometimes she calls to her lovers; and at other times to God, which is best of all, to have pity and compassion on her in her distress; and from whom it may be most expected, who is a God of grace and mercy:

my bowels are troubled; as the sea, agitated by winds, which casts up mire and dirt; or as any waters, moved by anything whatsoever, become thick and muddy; or like wine in fermentation; so the word <Arabic>^{f35}, in the Arabic language, signifies, expressive of great disturbance, confusion, and uneasiness:

mine heart is turned within me; has no rest nor peace:

for I have grievously rebelled; against God and his word; her sins were greatly aggravated, and these lay heavy on her mind and conscience, and greatly distressed her:

abroad the sword bereaveth; this, and what follows in the next clause, describe the state and condition of the Jews, while the city was besieged; without it, the sword of the Chaldeans bereaved mothers of their children, and children of their parents, and left them desolate:

at home [there is] as death; within the city, and in the houses of it, the famine raged, which was as death, and worse than immediate death; it was a lingering one: or, “in the house [was] certain death”^{f36}; for the “caph” here is not a mere note of similitude, but of certainty and reality; to abide at home was sure and certain death, nothing else could be expected. The Targum is

“within the famine kills like the destroying angel that is appointed over death;”

(see ^{<824>}Hebrews 2:14); and Jarchi interprets it of the fear of demons and noxious spirits, and the angels of death.

Ver. 21. *They have heard that I sigh: [there is] none to comfort me*, etc.] That is, the nations, as the Targum; the neighbouring ones, those that were her confederates and allies; the same with her lovers, as before, as Aben Ezra observes; these being near her, knew full well her sorrowful and distressed condition, being as it were within the hearing of her sighs and groans; and yet none of them offered to help her, or so much as to speak a comfortable word to her:

all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; not only her friends, but foes; meaning the Tyrians, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and as the following description of them shows; for it must design others from the Chaldeans, that were the immediate cause of it:

they are glad that thou hast done [it]; brought all this ruin and destruction on Jerusalem, which could never have been done, if the Lord had not willed it; and at this the above mentioned nations rejoiced; (see ^{<828>}Ezekiel 25:3 Obadiah 1:12); there being a considerable stop on the word glad, it may be rendered, as by some, “they are glad; but thou hast done it”^{f37}; not

they, but thou; and therefore must be patiently bore, and quietly submitted to, it being the Lord's doing:

thou wilt bring the day [that] thou hast called; the time of, he destruction of, he Chaldeans, who had the chief hand in the ruin of the Jewish nation, and of those that rejoiced at it; which time was fixed by the Lord, and proclaimed and published by his prophets, and would certainly and exactly come, as and when it was pointed out: some ^{f38} take it to be a wish or prayer, that God would bring it, as he had declared; though others interpret it in a quite different sense, “thou hast brought the day” ^{f39}; meaning on herself, the determined destruction; so the Targum,

“thou hast brought upon me the day of vengeance; thou hast called a time upon me to my desolation:”

and they shall be like unto me; in the same distressed, desolate, and sorrowful condition, being brought to ruin and destruction; which afterwards was the case of the Chaldeans, and all the other nations.

Ver. 22. *Let all their wickedness come before thee*, etc.] The Targum adds,

“in the day of the great judgment;”

but it seems to refer to present time, at least to the time fixed by the Lord for their ruin; and which the church imprecates, not from a spirit of revenge, but from a holy zeal for the glory of God; desiring that the wickedness of her enemies might be remembered by the Lord, so as to punish them in righteous judgment for the same:

and do unto them as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions; she owns that what was done to her was for her sins, and therefore could not charge God with injustice; only she desires the same might be done to her enemies, who were equally guilty: some render it, “glean them” ^{f40}; or rather, “gather them as a vintage”; or as grapes are gathered: “as thou hast gathered me”; as thou hast took me, and cast me into the winepress of thy wrath, and there hast trodden and squeezed me; (see ²⁰¹⁵ Lamentations 1:15); so do unto them:

for my sighs [are] many, and my heart [is] faint; her sighs were many because of her afflictions, and her heart faint because of her sighing.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 2

This chapter contains another alphabet, in which the Prophet Jeremiah, or those he represents, lament the sad condition of Jerusalem; the destruction of the city and temple, and of all persons and things relative to them, and to its civil or church state; and that as being from the hand of the Lord himself, who is represented all along as the author thereof, because of their sins, (~~2111~~ Lamentations 2:1-9); and then the elders and virgins of Zion are represented as in great distress, and weeping for those desolations; which were very much owing to the false prophets, that had deceived them, (~~2110~~ Lamentations 2:10-14); and all this occasioned great rejoicing in the enemies of Zion, (~~2115~~ Lamentations 2:15-17); but sorrow of heart to Zion herself, who is called to weeping, (~~2118~~ Lamentations 2:18,19); and the chapter is concluded with an address to the Lord, to take this her sorrowful case into consideration, and show pity and compassion, (~~2120~~ Lamentations 2:20-22).

Ver. 1. *How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger*, etc.] Not their persons for protection, as he did the Israelites at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; nor their sins, which he blots out as a thick cloud; or with such an one as he filled the tabernacle and temple with when dedicated; for this was “in his anger”, in the day of his anger, against Jerusalem; but with the thick and black clouds of calamity and distress; he “beclouded” ^{f41} her, as it may be rendered, and is by Broughton; he drew a veil, or caused a cloud to come over all her brightness and glory, and surrounded her with darkness, that her light and splendour might not be seen. Aben Ezra interprets it, “he lifted her up to the clouds”: that is, in order to cast her down with the greater force, as follows:

[and] cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel; all its glory, both in church and state; this was brought down from the highest pitch of its excellency and dignity, to the lowest degree of infamy and reproach; particularly this was true of the temple, and service of God in it, which was the beauty and glory of the nation, but now utterly demolished:

and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger; to spare and preserve that; meaning either the house of the sanctuary, the temple itself, as the Targum and Jarchi; or rather the ark with the mercy seat, on which the Shechinah or divine Majesty set his feet, when sitting between the cherubim; and is so called, (~~1382~~ 1 Chronicles 28:2 ~~1995~~ Psalm 99:5).

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied*, etc.] As he regarded not his own habitation the temple, nor the ark his footstool, it is no wonder he should be unconcerned about the habitations of others; as of the inhabitants of the land of Judea and of Jerusalem, particularly of the king, his nobles, and the great men; these the Lord swallowed up, or suffered to be swallowed up, as houses in an earthquake, and by an inundation, so as to be seen no more; and this he did without showing the least reluctance, pity, and compassion; being so highly incensed and provoked by their sins and transgressions:

he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; not only the dwelling houses of the people, but the most fortified places, their castles, towers, and citadels:

he hath brought [them] down to the ground; and not only battered and shook them, but beat them down, and laid them level with the ground; and all this done in the fury of his wrath, being irritated to it by the sins of his people; even the daughter of Judah, or the congregation thereof, as the Targum:

he hath polluted the kingdom, and the princes thereof; what was reckoned sacred, the kingdom of the house of David, and the kings and princes of it, the Lord's anointed; these being defiled with sin, God cast them away, as filth to the dunghill, and gave them up into the hands of the Gentiles, who were reckoned unclean; and thus they were profaned. Jarchi interprets these princes of the Israelites in common, who were called a kingdom of priests; and makes mention of a Midrash, that explains them of the princes above, or of heaven.

Ver. 3. *He hath cut off in [his] fierce anger all the horn of Israel*, etc.] All its power and strength, especially its kingly power, which is often signified by a horn in Scripture; (see ~~2072~~ Daniel 7:24); this the Lord took away in his fierce anger, and left the land destitute of all relief, help, defence and protection; whether from its king and princes, or from its men of war or fortified places; all being cut off and destroyed:

he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy; either his own right hand, with which he had used to fight for his people, and protect them, but now withdrawing it, left them to the mercy of their enemies; or Israel's right hand, which he so weakened, that they had no power to resist the enemy, and defend themselves:

and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire [which] devoureth round about; that is, his wrath was like a burning flaming fire, which consumes all around, wherever it comes; thus the Lord in his anger consumed Jacob, and left neither root nor branch.

Ver. 4. *He hath bent his bow like an enemy*, etc.] God sometimes appears as if he was an enemy to his people, when he is not, by his conduct and behaviour; by the dispensations of his providence they take him to be so, as Job did, (~~Job~~ Job 16:9,10,13,14); he bends his bow, or treads it, for the bending or stretching the bow was done by the foot; and as the Targum,

“and threw his arrows at me:”

he stood with his right hand as an adversary; with arrows in it, to put into his bow or with his sword drawn, as an adversary does. The Targum is,

“he stood at the right hand of Nebuchadnezzar and helped him, when he distressed his people Israel:”

and slew all [that were] pleasant to the eye; princes and priests, husbands and wives, parents and children, young men and maids; desirable to their friends and relations, and to the commonwealth:

in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion he poured out his fury like fire; that is, either in the temple, or in the city of Jerusalem, or both, which were burnt with fire, as the effect of divine wrath and fury; and which itself is comparable to fire; like a burning lamp of fire, as the Targum; or rather like a burning furnace or mountain; (see Na 1:6).

Ver. 5. *The Lord was as an enemy*, etc.] Who formerly was on their side, their God and guardian, their protector and deliverer, but now against them; and a terrible thing it is to have God for an enemy, or even to be as one; this is repeated, as being exceeding distressing, and even intolerable. Mr. Broughton renders it, “the Lord is become a very enemy”; taking “caph” for a note of reality, and not of similitude;

he hath swallowed up Israel; the ten tribes, or the Jewish nation in general; as a lion, or any other savage beast, swallows its prey, and makes nothing of it, and leaves none behind:

he hath swallowed up all her palaces: the palaces of Zion or Jerusalem; the palaces of the king, princes, nobles, and great men; as an earthquake or inundation swallows up whole streets and cities at once; (see Gill on “~~2ND~~ Lamentations 2:2”);

he hath destroyed his strong holds: the fortified places of the land of Israel, the towers and castles:

and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation; exceeding great lamentation, for the destruction of its cities, towns, villages, and the inhabitants of them.

Ver. 6. *And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as [if it were] of a garden*, etc.] The house of the sanctuary or temple, as the Targum; which was demolished at once with great force and violence, and as easily done as a tent or tabernacle is taken down; and no more account made of it than of a cottage or lodge in a vineyard or garden, set up while the fruit was, gathering; either to shelter from the heat of the sun in the day, or to lodge in at night; (see ~~2ND~~ Isaiah 1:8);

he hath destroyed his places in the assembly; the courts where the people used to assemble for worship in the temple; or the synagogues in Jerusalem, and other parts of the land:

the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion; there being neither places to keep them in, nor people to observe them:

and hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest; whose persons and offices were sacred, and ought to be treated by men with honour and respect; but, for the sins of both, the Lord despised them himself, and made them the object of his wrath and indignation, and suffered them to be despised and ill used by others, by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah had his children slain before his eyes, and then they were put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon, and there detained a captive all his days; and Seraiah the chief priest, or, as the Targum here has it, the high priest, was put to death by the king of Babylon; though not only the

persons of the king and priest are meant, but their offices also; the kingdom and priesthood ceased from being exercised for many years.

Ver. 7. *The Lord hath cast off his altar*, etc.] Whether of incense, or of burnt offerings; the sacrifices of which used to be acceptable to him; but now the altar being cast down and demolished, there were no more offerings; nor did he show any desire of them, but the reverse:

he hath abhorred his sanctuary; the temple; by suffering it to be profaned, pulled down, and burnt, it looked as if he had an abhorrence of it, and the service in it; as he had, as it was performed without faith in Christ, love to him, or any view to his glory; (see ^{<23113>} Isaiah 1:13,14);

he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; both the walls of the sanctuary, and the walls of the houses of the kin, and princes; especially thee former are meant, both by what goes before and follows:

they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast; that is the enemy, the Chaldeans, made a noise in the temple, blaspheming God, that had dwelt in it; insulting over the people of God, that had worshipped there; rejoicing in their victories over them; singing their “paeans” to their gods, and other profane songs; indulging themselves in revelling and rioting; making as great a noise with their shouts and songs as the priests, Levites, and people of Israel did, when they sung the songs of Zion on a festival day. The Targum is,

“as the voice of the people of the house of Israel, that prayed in the midst of it in the day of the passover.”

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion*, etc.] Either the wall of the city, as Aben Ezra; or the wall that encompassed the temple, and all the outward courts of it, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f42} thinks; this the Lord had determined to destroy, and according to his purposes did destroy it, or suffer it to be demolished; and so all were laid open for the enemy to enter:

he hath stretched out a line; a line of destruction, to mark out how far the destruction should go, and how much should be laid in ruins; all being as exactly done, according to the purpose and counsel of God, as if it was done by line and rule; (see ^{<23411>} Isaiah 34:11);

he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying; till he made a full end of the city and temple, as he first designed:

therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament: the “chel” and the wall; all that space between the courts of the temple and the wall that surrounded it was called the “chel”; and so the Targum, the circumference or enclosure; and these were laid waste together, and so said to lament: according to others they were two walls, a wall the son of a wall, as Jarchi interprets it; an outward and an inward wall, one higher than another; a low wall over against a high wall; which was as a rampart or bulwark, for the strength and support of it:

they languished together; or fell together, as persons in a fit faint away and full to the ground.

Ver. 9. *Her gates are sunk into the ground*, etc.] Either the gates of the city or temple, or both; being broke and demolished, and laid level with the ground, and covered with rubbish; for as for the Midrash, or exposition, that Jarchi mentions, that the gates sunk into the earth upon the approach of the enemy, that they might not have power over them, through which the ark passed, is a mere fable of their Rabbins; and equally as absurd is the additional gloss of the Targum,

“her gates sunk into the earth, because they sacrificed a hog, and brought of the blood of it to them.”

he hath destroyed and broken her bars; with which the gates were bolted and barred, that so the enemy might enter; it was God that did it, or suffered it to be done, or it would not have been in the power of the enemy:

her king and her princes [are] among the Gentiles; Zedekiah, and the princes that were not slain by the king of Babylon, were carried captive thither; and there they lived, even among Heathens that knew not God, and despised his worship:

the law [is] no [more]; the book of the law was burnt in the temple, and the tables of it carried away with the ark, or destroyed; and though, no doubt, there were copies of the law preserved, yet it was not read nor expounded; nor was worship performed according to the direction of it; nor could it be in a strange land. Mr. Broughton joins this with the

preceding clause, as descriptive of the Heathens: “her king and her princes [are] among Heathen that have no law”; (see ^{<R12>}Romans 2:12);

her prophets also find no vision from the Lord; there was none but Jeremiah left in the land, and none but Ezekiel and Daniel in the captivity; prophets were very rare at this time, as they were afterwards; for we hear of no more after the captivity, till the coming of the Messiah, but Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; so that there was very little open vision; the word of the Lord was precious or scarce; there was a famine of hearing it, (^{<H11>}1 Samuel 3:1 ^{<A11>}Amos 8:11 ^{<P11>}Psalms 74:9).

Ver. 10. *The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground, [and] keep silence*, etc.] Who used to sit in the gate on thrones of judgment, and passed sentence in causes tried before them; or were wont to give advice and counsel, and were regarded as oracles, now sit on the ground, and dumb, as mourners; (see ^{<R13>}Job 2:13);

they have cast up dust upon their heads; on their white hairs and gray locks, which bespoke wisdom, and made them grave and venerable:

they have girded themselves with sackcloth: after the manner of mourners; who used to be clothed in scarlet and rich apparel, in robes suitable to their office as civil magistrates:

the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground: through shame and sorrow; who used to look brisk and gay, and walk with outstretched necks, and carried their heads high, but now low enough. Aben Ezra interprets it of the hair of their heads, which used to be tied up, but now loosed and dishevelled, and hung down as it were to the ground.

Ver. 11. *Mine eyes do fail with tears*, etc.] According to Aben Ezra, everyone of the elders before mentioned said this; but rather they are the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, who had wept his eyes dry, or rather blind, on account of the calamities of his people; though he himself obtained liberty and enlargement by means thereof:

my bowels are troubled; all his inward parts were distressed:

my liver is poured upon the earth; his gall bladder, which lay at the bottom of his liver, broke, and he cast it up, and poured it on the earth; (see ^{<R13>}Job 16:13); and all this was

for the destruction of the daughter of my people; or, the “breach” of them ^{f43}; their civil and church state being destroyed and broke to shivers; and for the ruin of the several families of them: particularly

because the children and sucklings swoon in the streets of the city; through famine, for want of bread, with those that could eat it; and for want of the milk of their mothers and nurses, who being starved themselves could not give it; and hence the poor infants fainted and swooned away; which was a dismal sight, and heart melting to the prophet.

Ver. 12. *They say to their mothers, where [is] corn and wine?* etc.] Not the sucklings who could not speak, nor were used to corn and wine, but the children more grown; both are before spoken of, but these are meant, even the young men of Israel, as the Targum; and such as had been brought up in the best manner, had been used to wine, and not water, and therefore ask for that as well as corn; both take in all the necessities of life; and which they ask of their mothers, who had been used to feed them, and were most tender of them; but now not seeing and having their usual provisions, and not knowing what was the reason of it, inquire after them, being pressed with hunger:

when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city; having no food given them, though they asked for it time after time, they fainted away, and died a lingering death; as wounded persons do who are not killed at once, which is the more distressing:

when their soul was poured out into their mothers’ bosom; meaning not the desires of their souls for food, expressed in moving and melting language as they sat in their mothers’ laps, and lay in their bosoms; which must be piercing unto them, if no more was designed; but their souls or lives themselves, which they gave up through famine, as the Targum; expiring in their mothers’ arms.

Ver. 13. *What thing shall I take to witness for thee?* etc.] What argument can be made use of? what proof or evidence can be given? what witnesses can be called to convince thee, and make it a clear case to time, that ever any people or nation was in such distress and calamity, what with sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity, as thou art?

what thing shall I liken thee to, O daughter of Jerusalem? what kingdom or nation ever suffered the like? no example can be given, no instance that comes up to it; not the Egyptians, when the ten plagues were inflicted on

them; not the Canaanites, when conquered and drove out by Joshua; not the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians, when subdued by David; or any other people:

what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for this is one way that friends comfort the afflicted, by telling them that such an one's case was as bad, and worse, than theirs; and therefore bid them be of good heart; bear their affliction patiently; before long it will be over; but nothing of this kind could be said here; no, nor any hope given it would be otherwise; they could not say their case was like others, or that it was not desperate:

for thy breach [is] great like the sea; as large and as wide as that: Zion's troubles were a sea of trouble; her afflictions as numerous and as boisterous as the waves of the sea; and as salt, as disagreeable, and as intolerable, as the waters of it: or her breach was great, like the breach of the sea; when it overflows its banks, or breaks through its bounds, there is no stopping it, but it grows wider and wider:

who can heal thee? it was not in the power of man, in her own power, or of her allies, to recover her out of the hands of the enemy; to restore her civil or church state; her wound was incurable; none but God could be her physician. The Targum is,

“for thy breach is great as the greatness of the breach of the waves of the sea in the time of its tempest; and who is the physician that can heal thee of thy infirmity?”

Ver. 14. *Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee,* etc.] Not the prophets of the Lord; but false prophets, as the Targum; which were of the people's choosing, and were acceptable to them; prophets after their own hearts, because they prophesied smooth things, such as they liked; though in the issue they proved “vain” and “foolish”, idle stories, impertinent talk, the fictions of their own brains; and yet they pretended to have visions of them from the Lord; as that within two years Jeconiah, and all the vessels of the temple carried away by the king of Babylon, should be returned; and that he would not come against Jerusalem, nor should it be delivered into his hands; (see ~~xxx~~ Jeremiah 28:2-4);

and they have not discovered thine iniquity: they did not tell them of their sins; they took no pains to convince them of them, but connived at them; instead of reproving them for them, they soothed them in them; they did

not “remove” the covering that was “over [their] iniquity”^{f44}, as it might be rendered; which they might easily have done, and laid their sirs to open view: whereby they might have been ashamed of them, and brought to repentance for them. The Targum is,

“neither have they manifested the punishment that should come upon thee for thy sins;”

but, on the contrary, told them it should not come upon them; had they dealt faithfully with them, by showing them their transgressions, and the consequences of them, they might have been a means of preventing their ruin: and, as it here follows,

to turn away thy captivity; either to turn them from their backslidings and wanderings about, as Jarchi; or to turn them by repentance, as the Targum; or to prevent their going into captivity:

but have seen for thee false burdens, and causes of banishment; that is, false prophecies against Babylon, and in favour of the Jews; prophecies, even those that are true, being often called “burdens”, as the “burden of Egypt”, and “the burden of Damascus”, etc. and the rather this name is here given to those false prophecies because the prophecies of Jeremiah were reproached by them with it, (²⁰³³Jeremiah 23:33), etc. and because these proved in the issue burdensome, sad, and sorrowful ones though they once tickled and pleased; and were the cause of the people’s going into exile and captivity they listening to them: or they were “depulsions” or “expulsions”^{f45}; drivings, that drove them from the right way; from God and his worship; from his word and prophets; and, at last, the means of driving them out of their own land; of impelling them to sin, and so of expelling them from their own country. The Targum renders it,

“words of error.”

Ver. 15. *All that pass by clap [their] hands at thee*, etc.] Travellers that passed by, and saw Jerusalem in ruins, clapped their hands at it, by way of rejoicing, as well pleased at the sight. This must be understood, not of the inhabitants of the land, but of strangers, who had no good will to it; though they seem to be distinguished from their implacable enemies in (²⁰¹⁶Lamentations 2:16):

they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem; by way of scorn and derision; hereby expressing their contempt of her, and the pleasure and satisfaction they took in seeing her in this condition:

[saying, is] this the city that [men] call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? a complete city, a most beautiful one for its situation; for its fortifications by nature and art; for its spacious buildings, palaces, and towers; and especially for the magnificent temple in it, and the residence of the God of heaven there, and that pompous worship of him there performed; on account of all which, and the abundant blessings of goodness bestowed upon the inhabitants, they had reason to rejoice more than all the men of the world besides; as well as they contributed many ways to the good and happiness of all nations; this is what had been said by themselves, (^{198E}Psalm 48:2 50:2); and had even been owned by others; by the forefathers of those very persons that now insult over it. So the Targum,

“is this the city which our fathers that were of old said? etc.”

nor do they by these words deny, but rather own, that it had been what was said of it; but now the case was otherwise; instead of being a perfect beauty, it was a perfect heap of rubbish; instead of being the joy of the whole earth, it was the offscouring of all things.

Ver. 16. *All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee*, etc.] Or “widened”^{f46} them; stretched them out as far as they could, to reproach, blaspheme, and insult; or, like gaping beasts, to swallow up and devour:

they hiss and gnash their teeth; hiss like serpents, and gnash their teeth in wrath and fury; all expressing their extreme hatred and abhorrence of the Jews, and the delight they took in their ruin and destruction:

they say, we have swallowed [her] up; all her wealth and riches were come into their hands, and were all their own; as well as they thought these were all their own doings, owing to their wisdom and skill, courage and strength; not seeing and knowing the hand of God in all this. These words seem to be the words of the Chaldeans particularly:

certainly this [is] the day that we have looked for; we have found, we have seen [it]: this day of Jerusalem’s destruction, which they had long looked for, and earnestly desired; and now it was come; and they had what they so much wished for; and express it with the utmost pleasure. In this verse the

order of the alphabet is not observed the letter **p**, “pe”, being set before the letter **ā**, “ain”, which should be first, according to the constant order of the alphabet; and which was so before the times of Jeremiah, even in David’s time, as appears by the ninety ninth Psalm, and others. Grotius thinks it is after the manner of the Chaldeans; but the order of the Hebrew and Chaldee alphabets is the same Dr Lightfoot thinks ^{f47} the prophet, by this charge, hints at the seventy years that Jerusalem should be desolate, which were now begun; the letter **ā**, “ain”, in numbers, denoting seventy. So Mr. Bedford ^{f48}, who observes, that the transposition of these letters seems to show the confusion in which the prophet was, when he considered that this captivity should last seventy years. Jarchi ^{f49} says one is put before the other, because they spoke with their mouths what they saw not with their eyes; “pe” signifying the mouth, and “ain” an eye.

Ver. 17. *The Lord hath done [that] which he had devised*, etc.] It was not so much the Chaldeans that did it, though they ascribed it to themselves; but it was the Lord’s doing, and what he had deliberately thought of, purposed and designed within himself; all whose purposes and devices certainly come to pass:

he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old; not only by the mouth of Jeremiah, years ago, or in the times of Isaiah, long before him; but even in the days of Moses; (see ^(~~RSG~~) Leviticus 26:17), etc. (^(~~RSD~~) Deuteronomy 28:20), etc. So the Targum,

“which he commanded to Moses the prophet from ancient days, that if the children of Israel would not keep the commands of the Lord, he would take vengeance on them:”

he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied; he hath thrown down, or caused to be thrown down, without any pity, the walls of Jerusalem; and not only the houses and palaces in it, but also his own house, the temple:

and he hath caused [thine] enemy to rejoice over thee; giving thorn victory, and putting all into their hands; on which they insulted them, and gloried over them:

he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries; increased their strength and power, their kingdom and authority; and which swelled their pride, and made them more haughty and insolent.

Ver. 18. *Their heart cried unto the Lord*, etc.] Either the heart of their enemies, as Aben Ezra; which cried against the Lord, and blasphemed him; or rather the heart of the Jews in their distress, when they saw the walls of the city breaking down, they cried unto the Lord for help and protection, whether sincerely or not; no doubt some did; and all were desirous of preservation:

O wall of the daughter of Zion! this seems to be an address of the prophet to the people of Jerusalem carried captive, which was now without houses and inhabitants, only a broken wall standing, some remains and ruins of that; which is mentioned to excite their sorrow and lamentation:

let tears run down like a river, day and night; incessantly, for the destruction and desolation made:

give thyself no rest; or intermission; but weep continually:

let not the apple of thine eye cease; from pouring out tears; or from weeping, as the Targum; or let it not “be silent”^{f50}, or asleep; but be open and employed in beholding the miseries of the nation, and in deploring them.

Ver. 19. *Arise, cry out in the night*, etc.] That is, O daughter of Zion, or congregation of Israel, as the Targum; who are addressed and called upon by the prophet to arise from their beds, and shake off their sleep, and sloth, and stupidity, and cry to God in the night season; and be earnest and importunate with him for help and assistance. Aben Ezra rightly observes, that the word used signifies a lifting up of the voice both in singing and in lamentation; here it is used in the latter sense; and denotes great vehemency and earnestness in crying unto God, arising from deep distress and sorrow, which prevents sleep:

in the beginning of the watches; either at the first of them; so Broughton renders it, “at the first watch”; which began at the time of going to bed: or at the beginning of each of them; for with the ancient Jews there were three of them; in later times four: or in the beginning of the morning watch, as the Targum; very early in the morning, before sun rising; as they are called upon to pray late at night, so betimes in the mottling:

pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord; use the utmost freedom with him; tell him, in the fullest manner, thy whole case, fit thy complaints; unbosom thyself to him; keep nothing from him; speak out

freely all lily soul needs; do all this publicly, and in the most affectionate way and manner, thy soul melted in floods of tears, under a sense of sin, and pressing evils for it. The Targum is,

“pour out as water the perverseness of thine heart, and return by repentance, and pray in the house of the congregation (or synagogue) before the face of the Lord:”

lift up thine hands towards him; in prayer, as the Targum adds; for this is a prayer gesture, as in (~~281~~ Lamentations 3:41 ~~518~~ 1 Timothy 2:8);

for the life of thy young children that faint for hunger in the top of every street; pray for them, that they might have food and sustenance, to preserve them alive; who, for want of it, were ready to swoon and die the public streets; in the top of them, where they met, and where was the greatest concourse of people, and yet none able to relieve them.

Ver. 20. *Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this*, etc.]

On whom thou hast brought these calamities of famine and sword; not upon thine enemies, but upon thine own people, that are called by thy name, and upon theirs, their young ones, who had not sinned as their fathers had: here the church does not charge God with any injustice, or complain of hard usage; only humbly entreats he would look upon her, in her misery, with an eye of pity and compassion; and consider her sorrowful condition; and remember the relation she stood in to him; and so submits her case, and leaves it with him. These words seem to be suggested to the church by the prophet, as what might be proper for her to use, when praying for the life of her young children; and might be introduced by supplying the word “saying” before “behold, O Lord”, etc.

shall the women eat their fruit; their children, the fruit of their womb, as the Targum; their newborn babes, that hung at their breasts, and were carried in their arms; it seems they did, as was threatened they should, (~~183~~ Leviticus 26:29 ~~185~~ Deuteronomy 28:57); and so they did at the siege of Samaria, and at the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans and the Romans:

[and] children of a span long? or of a hand’s breadth; the breadth of the palms of the hand, denoting very little ones: or “children handled”, or “swaddled with the hands”^{f51}; of their parents, who are used to stroke the limbs of their babes, to bring them to; and keep them in right form and

shape, and swaddle them with swaddling bands in a proper manner; (see ~~22~~ Lamentations 2:22); and so the Targum,

“desirable children, who are wrapped in fine linen.”

Jarchi ^{f52} interprets it of Doeg Ben Joseph, whom his mother slew, and ate:

shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? as very probably some were, who fled thither for safety when the city was broken up; but were not spared by the merciless Chaldeans, who had no regard to their office and character; nor is it any wonder they should not, when the Jews themselves slew Zechariah, a priest and prophet, between the porch and the altar; of whom the Targum here makes mention; and to whom Jarchi applies these words.

Ver. 21. *The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets,* etc.]

Young men and old men, virgins and aged women; these promiscuously lay on the ground in the public streets, fainting and dying for want of food; or lay killed there by the sword of the enemy; the Chaldeans sparing neither age nor sex. The Targum interprets it of their sleeping on the ground,

“young men slept on the ground in the villages, and old men who used to lie on pillows of fine wool, and on beds of ivory;”

but the former sense is confirmed by what follows:

my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; by the sword of the Chaldeans, when they entered the city:

thou hast slain [them] in the day of thine anger: thou hast killed, [and] not pitied; the Chaldeans were only instruments; it was the Lord’s doing; it was according to his will; it was what he had purposed and decreed; what he had solemnly declared and threatened; and now in his providence brought about, for the sins of the Jews, by which he was provoked to anger; and so gave them up into the hands of their enemies, to slay them without mercy; and which is here owned; the church takes notice of the hand of God in all this.

Ver. 22. *Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about,* etc.] Terrible enemies, as the Chaldeans; these came at the call of God, as soldiers at the command of their general; and in as great numbers as men from all parts of Judea flocked to Jerusalem on any of the three solemn

feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles. The Targum paraphrases it very foreign to the sense;

“thou shall proclaim liberty to thy people, the house of Israel, by the Messiah, as thou didst by Moses and Aaron on the day of the passover:”

so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped or remained; in the city of Jerusalem, and in the land of Judea; either they were put to death, or were carried captive; so that there was scarce an inhabitant to be found, especially after Gedaliah was slain, and the Jews left in the land were carried into Egypt:

those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed; or “whom I could span”, as Broughton; or “handled”; whose limbs she had stroked with her hands, whom she had swathed with bands, and had carried in her arms, and had most carefully and tenderly brought up: by those she had “swaddled” are meant the little ones; and by those she had “brought up” the greater ones, as Aben Ezra observes; but both the enemy, the Chaldeans, consumed and destroyed without mercy, without regard to their tender years, or the manner in which they were brought up; but as if they were nourished like lambs for the day of slaughter.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 3

This chapter is a complaint and lamentation like the former, and on the same subject, only the prophet mixes his own afflictions and distresses with the public calamities; or else he represents the church in her complaints; and some have thought him to be a type of Christ throughout the whole; to whom various things may be applied. It is indeed written in a different form from the other chapters, in another sort of metre; and though in an alphabetical manner as the rest, yet with this difference, that three verses together begin with the same letter; so that the alphabet is gone through three times in it. Here is first a complaint of the afflictions of the prophet, and of the people, expressed by a rod, by darkness, by wormwood and gall, and many other things; and especially by the Lord's appearing against them as an enemy, in a most severe and terrible manner; shutting out their prayer; being as a bear and lion to them; and giving them up to the cruelty and scorn of their enemies, (~~218B~~ Lamentations 3:1-21); then follows some comfort taken by them, from the mercy, faithfulness, and goodness of God; from the usefulness of patience in bearing afflictions; and from the end of God in laying them upon men; and from the providence of God, by which all things are ordered, (~~218D~~ Lamentations 3:22-38); wherefore, instead of complaining, it would be better, it is suggested, to attend to the duties of examination of their ways, and of repentance, and of prayer, (~~218D~~ Lamentations 3:39-41); and a particular prayer is directed to, in which confession of sin is made, and their miseries deplored, by reason of the hidings of God's face, and the insults of their enemies, (~~218D~~ Lamentations 3:42-47); and then the prophet expresses his sympathy with his people under affliction, and declares what he himself met with from his enemies, (~~218B~~ Lamentations 3:48-54); and relates how he called upon the Lord, and he heard and delivered him, (~~218B~~ Lamentations 3:55-58); and concludes with a request that he would judge his cause, and avenge him on enemies, (~~218D~~ Lamentations 3:59-66).

Ver. 1. *I [am] the man [that] hath seen affliction*, etc.] Had a much experience of it, especially ever since he had been a prophet; being

reproached and ill used by his own people, and suffering with them in their calamities; particularly, as Jarchi observes, his affliction was greater than the other prophets, who indeed prophesied of the destruction of the city and temple, but did not see it; whereas he lived to see it: he was not indeed the only man that endured affliction, but he was remarkable for his afflictions; he had a large share of them, and was herein a type of Christ, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs:

by the rod of his wrath; that is, by the rod of the wrath of God, for he is understood; it is a relative without an antecedent, as in (^{<2101>}Song of Solomon 1:1); unless the words are to be considered in connection (^{<2122>}Lamentations 2:22). The Targum is,

“by the rod of him that chastiseth in his anger;”

so Jarchi; but God’s chastisements of his own people are in love, though thought sometimes by them to be in wrath and hot displeasure; so the prophet imagined, but it was not so; perhaps some regard may be had to the instrument of Jerusalem’s destruction, the king of Babylon, called the rod of the Lord’s anger, (^{<2305>}Isaiah 10:5); all this was true of Christ, as the surety of his people, and as sustaining their persons, and standing in their room.

Ver. 2. *He hath led me, and brought [me into] darkness*, etc.] Which oftentimes signifies distress, calamity, and affliction, of one sort or another: thus the Jews were brought into the darkness of captivity; Jeremiah to the darkness of a dungeon, to which there may be an allusion; and Christ his antitype was under the hidings of God’s face; and at the same time there was darkness all around him, and all over the land; and all this is attributed to God; it being by his appointment, and by his direction and permission:

but not [into] light; prosperity and joy; the affliction still continuing; though God does in his due time bring his people to the light of comfort, and of his gracious presence, as he did the above persons; (see ^{<1971>}Psalms 97:11 112:4).

Ver. 3. *Surely against me is he turned*, etc.] As an enemy, who used to be a friend; he has so altered and changed the course of his providence, as if his favour and affections were wholly removed; he has planted his artillery against me, and made me the butt of his arrows: or, “only against me”; so Jarchi; as if he was the only person, or the Jews the only people, so afflicted of God:

he turneth his hand [against me] all the day; to smite with one blow after another, and that continually, without ceasing; so the hand of justice was turned upon Christ, as the surety of his people, and he was smitten and stricken of God; while the hand of grace and mercy was turned upon them; (see ^{<3817>}Zechariah 13:7).

Ver. 4. *My flesh and my skin hath he made old*, etc.] His flesh with blows, and his skin with smiting, as the Targum; his flesh was so emaciated, and his skin so withered and wrinkled, that he looked like an old man; as our Lord, when little more than thirty years of age, what with his sorrows and troubles, looked like one about fifty:

he hath broken my bones; that is, his strength was greatly weakened, which lay in his bones; and he could not stir to help himself, any more than a man whose bones are broken; and was in as much pain and distress as if this had been his case; otherwise it was not literally true, either of the Jews, or of Jeremiah, or of Christ.

Ver. 5. *He hath builded against me*, etc.] Fortresses, as the Targum adds; as when forts and batteries were raised by the Chaldeans against the city of Jerusalem, in which the prophet was:

and compassed [me] with gall and travail; or “weariness” ^{f53}; the same with gall and wormwood, (^{<2789>}Lamentations 3:19); as Jarchi observes. The sense is, he was surrounded with sorrow, affliction, and misery, which were as disagreeable as gall; or like poison that drank up his spirits, and made him weary of his life. Thus our Lord was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; *περιλυπος*, encompassed with sorrows, (^{<4558>}Matthew 26:38). The Targum is,

“he hath surrounded the city, and rooted up the heads of the people, and caused them to fail.”

Ver. 6. *He hath set me in dark places*, etc.] In the dark house of the prison, as the Targum; in the dark dungeon where the prophet was put; or the captivity in which the Jews were, and which was like the dark grave or state of the dead; and hence they are said to be in their graves, (^{<2572>}Ezekiel 37:12). Christ was laid in the dark grave literally:

as [they that be] dead of old: that have been long dead, and are forgotten, as if they had never been; (see ^{<6805>}Psalms 88:5); or, “as the dead of the

world” ^{f54}, or age; who, being dead, are gone out of the world, and no more in it. The Targum is,

“as the dead who go into another world.”

Ver. 7. *He hath hedged me about, that I cannot go out*, etc.] When in prison, or in the dungeon, or during the siege of Jerusalem; though the phrase may only denote in general the greatness of his troubles, with which he was encompassed, and how inextricable they were; like a hedge about a vineyard, or a wall about a city, which could not easily be got over:

he hath made my chain heavy; his affliction intolerable. It is a metaphor taken from malefactors that have heavy chains put upon their legs, that they may not make their escape out of prison: or, “my brass” ^{f55}; that is, chains, or a chain made of brass; so the Targum,

“he hath made heavy upon my feet fetters of brass.”

Ver. 8. *Also when I cry and shout*, etc.] Cry, because of the distress of the enemy within; “shout”, or cry aloud for help from others without; as persons in a prison do, to make them hear and pity their case: thus the prophet in his affliction cried aloud to God; was fervent, earnest, and importunate in prayer; and yet not heard:

he shutteth out my prayer; shuts the door, that it may not enter; as the door is sometimes shut upon beggars, that their cry may not be heard. The Targum is,

“the house of my prayer is shut.”

Jarchi interprets it of the windows of the firmament being shut, so that his prayer could not pass through, or be heard; (see ^{צריח} Lamentations 3:44). The phrase designs God’s disregard, or seeming disregard, of the prayer of the prophet, or of the people; and his shutting his ears against it. Of this, as the Messiah’s case, (see ^{צריח} Psalm 22:2).

Ver. 9. *He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone*, etc.] Not with a hedge of thorns, or mud walls, but with a fence of stones; and these not rough, and laid loosely together, but hewn and put in order, and well cemented. The Targum is, with marble hewn stones, which are harder than common stones, and not so easily demolished; this may respect the case of the prophet in prison, and in the dungeon, and in Jerusalem, when besieged; or in general his afflictive state, from whence he had no prospect of

deliverance; or the state of the Jews in captivity, from which there was no likelihood of a release;

he hath made my paths crooked; or, “perverted my ways”^{f56}; so that he could not find his way out, when he attempted it; he got into a way which led him wrong; everything went cross and against him, and all his measures were disconcerted, and his designs defeated; no one step he took prospered.

Ver. 10. *He [was] unto me [as] a bear lying in wait*, etc.] For its prey, which seizes on it at once, and tears it in pieces; such were the Chaldeans to the Jews by divine permission:

[and as] a lion in secret places; lurking there, in order to take every opportunity and advantage, and fall upon any creature that comes that way. The same thing is signified here as before; (see ^{<X54>}Hosea 5:14).

Ver. 11. *He hath turned aside my ways*, etc.] Or caused me to depart or go back from the way I was in, and so fall into the hand of the enemy that lay in wait, as before. Jarchi interprets the word of thorns, and of scattering the way with thorns, and hedging it up with them, so that there was no passing, (^{<X116>}Hosea 2:6); the sense seems to be the same with (^{<X119>}Lamentations 3:9);

and pulled me in pieces: as any creature that falls into the hands of a bear or lion. Jarchi says it signifies a stopping of the feet, so that the traveller cannot go on in his way; and in the Talmudic language it is used for the breaking off of branches of trees, which being strowed in the way, hinder passengers from travelling; and this sense agrees with what goes before:

he hath made me desolate; or brought me into a desolate condition, into ruin and destruction, as the Jews were in Babylon.

Ver. 12. *He hath bent his bow*, etc.] Which is put for all the instruments, of war; the Chaldeans were archers, and shot their arrows into the city:

and set me as a mark for the arrow; as a target to shoot at; signifying that God dealt with him, or his people, as enemies, the object of his wrath and indignation; and if he directed his arrow against them, it must needs hit them; there was no escaping his vengeance; (see ^{<X121>}Job 7:20 16:12).

Ver. 13. *He hath caused the arrows of his quiver*, etc.] Or, “the sons of his quiver”^{f57}; an usual Hebraism; the quiver is compared, as Aben Ezra

observes, to a pregnant woman; and Horace has a like expression, “venenatis gravidam sagittis pharetram”^{f58}; the judgments of God are often signified by this metaphor, even his four sore ones, sword, famine, pestilence, and noisome beast, (^{<1623>}Deuteronomy 32:23,42 ^{<1616>}Ezekiel 5:16 14:21); these, says the prophet, he caused

to enter into my reins; that is, into the midst of his land and people, or into the city of Jerusalem; or these affected his mind and heart as if so many arrows had stuck in him, the poison of which drank up his spirits, (^{<1816>}Job 6:4 ^{<1812>}Psalms 38:2).

Ver. 14. *I was a derision to all my people*, etc.] So Jeremiah was to the people of the Jews, and especially to his townsmen, the men of Anathoth, (^{<2417>}Jeremiah 20:7,8); but if he represents the body of the people, others must be intended; for they could not be a derision to themselves. The Targum renders it, to the spoilers of my people; that is, either the wicked among themselves, or the Chaldeans; and Aben Ezra well observes, that “ammi” is put for “ammim”, the people; and so is to be understood of all the people round about them, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, that laughed at their destruction; though some interpret it of the wicked among the Jews, to whom the godly were a derision; or of those who had been formerly subject to the Jews, and so their people, though not now:

[and] their song all the day; beating on their tabrets, and striking their harps, for joy; for the word^{f59} used signifies not vocal, but instrumental music; of such usage of the Messiah, (see ^{<1892>}Psalms 69:12).

Ver. 15. *He hath filled me with bitterness*, etc.] Or “with bitteresses”^{f60}; instead of food, bitter herbs; the allusion perhaps is to the bitter herbs eaten at the passover, and signify bitter afflictions, sore calamities, of which the prophet and his people had their fill. The Targum is,

“with the gall of serpents;” (see ^{<1814>}Job 20:14);

he hath made me drunken with wormwood; with wormwood drink; but this herb being a wholesome one, though bitter, some think that henbane, or wolfsbane, is rather meant, which is of a poisonous and intoxicating nature; it is no unusual thing for persons to be represented as drunk with affliction, (^{<2517>}Isaiah 51:17,21 ^{<2527>}Jeremiah 25:27).

Ver. 16. *He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones*, etc.] With gritty bread, such as is made of corn ground with new millstones, the grit of

which mixes with the flour; or with stony bread, as Seneca^{f61} calls a benefit troublesome to others; with bread that has little stones mixed with it, by eating of which the teeth are broken, as Jarchi observes: the phrase signifies afflictions and troubles, which are very grievous and disagreeable, like gravel in the mouth, as sin in its effects often proves, (^{<2017>}Proverbs 20:17);

he hath covered me with ashes; as mourners used to be; the word rendered “covered” is only used in this place. Aben Ezra renders it, “he hath defiled me”; and Jarchi and Ben Melech, from the Misnah, “he hath pressed me”, without measure; (see ^{<4168>}Luke 6:38); and so the Targum,

“he hath humbled me:”

but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, “he hath fed me with ashes”; which version is defended by Castel^{f62} and Noldius^{f63}, and best agrees with the preceding clause; the sense is the same with (^{<1947>}Psalms 102:9).

Ver. 17. *And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace*, etc.] From the time the city was besieged by the Chaldeans, and now the people was carried captive; who could have no true peace, being in a foreign land, in an enemy’s country, and out of their own, and far from the place of divine worship; nor could the prophet have any peace of soul, in the consideration of these things, the city, temple, and nation, being desolate, though he himself was not in captivity.

I forgat prosperity; or “good”^{f64}; he had been so long from the enjoyment of it, that he had lost the idea of it, and was thoughtless about it, never expecting to see it any more.

Ver. 18. *And I said, my strength and my hope are perished from the Lord*.] The former of these words signifies, according to Aben Ezra, “my standing”, my subsistence, my continuance in being, or my perpetuity; according to Jarchi, my abiding^{f65} in this world; it is rendered “blood” in (^{<2017>}Isaiah 63:3); which is the support of life; and which when gone, or ceases to circulate, a man ceases to be: the sense is, that the prophet, or those he represents, looked upon themselves as dead men, at least of a short continuance; their natural strength was exhausted, and they must quickly die, and had no hope of living, or of enjoying the divine favour, or good things, at the hand of God. Some understand it of spiritual strength to do good, and of hope of having good things, or deliverance from the hand

of God, which they were despairing of; for the words are the language of despondency, and betray great weakness and infirmity; for in the Lord is everlasting strength, and he is the hope of his people, and the Saviour of them in time of trouble, (^{<2304>}Isaiah 26:4 45:24 ^{<2448>}Jeremiah 14:8).

Ver. 19. *Remembering mine affliction and my misery*, etc.] The miserable affliction of him and his people; the remembrance of which, and poring upon it continually, caused the despondency before expressed: though it may be rendered imperatively, “remember my affliction, and my misery”^{f66}; so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and Aben Ezra observes, that the words may be considered as a request to God, and so they seem to be; the prophet, and the people he represents, were not so far gone into despair, as to cast off prayer before God; but once more looked up to him, beseeching that he would, in his great mercy and pity, remember them in their distressed condition, and deliver out of it; for none could do it but himself:

the wormwood and the gall; figurative expressions of bitter and grievous afflictions, (^{<2385>}Lamentations 3:5,15).

Ver. 20. *My soul hath [them] still in remembrance*, etc.] That is, according to our version, affliction and misery, compared to wormwood and gall: but the words, “my soul”, are fetched from the next clause, where they ought to stand, and this to be rendered, “in remembering thou wilt remember”^{f67}; or, “thou wilt surely remember”, and so expresses the confidence of the prophet, and his firm belief, his faith and hope increasing in prayer, that God would in much mercy remember his people, and their afflictions, and save them out of them:

and is humbled in me; both under the afflicting hand of God, and in view and hope of his mercy: though rather it should be rendered, “and” or “for my soul meditateth within me”^{f68}; says or suggests such things to me, that God will in wrath remember mercy; (see ^{<1970>}Psalm 77:7). So Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, that interprets it of his soul’s waiting till the time that God remembers.

Ver. 21. *This I recall to my mind*, etc.] Not affliction and misery, but the Lord’s remembrance of his people; what he had been used to do, and would do again; and particularly what follows, the abundant mercy of God, and his great faithfulness; these things the prophet fetched back to his mind; and revolved them in his heart; says he,

and therefore have I hope; this revived his hope, which he was ready to say was perished from the Lord, and there was no foundation for it; but now he saw there was, and therefore took heart, and encouraged himself in the grace and mercy of God.

Ver. 22. [*It is of*] *the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed*, etc.] It was true of the prophet, that he died not in prison, or in the dungeon; and of the people of the Jews, who though many of them perished by the sword, famine, and pestilence, yet God did not make a full end of them, according to his gracious promise, (~~2RII~~ Jeremiah 30:11); but left them a seed, a remnant, from whence the Messiah, the mercy promised, should come, and to which it was owing they were not utterly cut off for their sins: nor are any of the Lord's special people ever consumed; their estates may be consumed, and so may their bodies by wasting diseases, and at last by death; but not their souls, not only as to their being, but as to their well being, here and hereafter; though their peace, joy, and comfort, may be gone for a while, through temptation, desertion, and the prevalence of corruption; and they may be in declining circumstances, as to the exercise of grace, yet the principle itself can never be lost; faith, hope, and love, will abide; nor can they eternally perish, or be punished with an everlasting destruction: all which is to be ascribed not to their own strength to preserve themselves, nor to any want of desert in them to be destroyed, or of power in God to consume them; but to his "mercies" and "goodnesses", the multitude of them; for there is an abundance of mercy, grace, and goodness in God, and various are the instances of it; as in the choice of his people to grace and glory; in the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it they are interested in; in redemption by Christ; in regeneration by his Spirit; in the forgiveness of their sins; and in their complete salvation; which are all so many reasons why they are not, and shall not be, consumed. The words may be rendered, "the mercies" or "goodnesses of the Lord, for they are not consumed", or, "that the mercies of the Lord", etc. ^{f69} Jarchi observes, that "tamnu" is as "tammu"; the "nun" being inserted, according to Aben Ezra, instead of doubling the letter "mem"; and the former makes the sense to be this, in connection with the (~~2RII~~ Lamentations 3:21); "this I recall to mind the mercies of the Lord, that they are not consumed"; to which agrees the Targum,

"the goodnesses, of the Lord, for they cease not;"

and so the Septuagint, “the mercies of the Lord, for they have not left me”; and to the same sense the Syriac version is, “the mercies of the Lord, for they have no end”, and Aben Ezra’s note on the text is almost in the same words,

“for there is no end to the mercies of God;”

because his compassions fail not; or, “his tender mercies”^{f70}; of which he is full, and which are bestowed in a free and sovereign way, and are the spring of all good things, and a never failing one they are; and this is another reason why the Lord’s people are not consumed, and never shall, because of the mercies of the Lord, since these shall never fail; for though they are, yet should they fail, they might be consumed; but these are from everlasting to everlasting, and are kept with Christ their covenant head; (see ^{<9A37>}Psalm 103:17 89:28).

Ver. 23. [*They are*] *new every morning*, etc.] That is, the tender mercies or compassions of God are, which prove that they fail not; there are instances of them every day, not only in a temporal, but in a spiritual sense; they are ever new, always fresh and vigorous, constant and perpetual; such are the love, grace, and mercy of God, though of old, yet daily renewed in the manifestations thereof; and which make a morning of spiritual light, joy, and comfort; and whenever it is morning with the saints, they have new discoveries of the love of God to them; and these indeed are a bright morning to them, a morning without clouds;

great [is] thy faithfulness; some render it “thy faith concerning thee”^{f71}; this is a great grace, it is the gift of God, the operation of his Spirit, and to exercise it is a great thing; to this purpose is Jarchi’s note,

“great is thy promise, and a great thing it is to believe in thee, that it shall be performed, and that thou wilt observe or keep what thou hast promised to us;”

but the attribute of God’s faithfulness is rather meant; which is another reason why the people of God are not consumed, since that never fails; God is faithful to himself, and cannot deny himself; he is faithful to his counsels and purposes, which shall be truly accomplished; and to his covenant and promises, which shall be fulfilled; and to his Son, the surety and Saviour of his people.

Ver. 24. *The Lord [is] my portion, saith my soul*, etc.] The prophet, or the church, whom he represents, rises and increases in the exercise of faith; from considering the mercies, compassions, and faithfulness of God, concludes a sure and firm interest in him, as a portion and inheritance. The Lord is the portion of his people in life and in death, in time and to eternity; all he is, and has, is theirs; they are heirs of him, and shall enjoy him for ever, and therefore shall not be consumed; he is a portion large and full, inexpressibly rich and great, a soul satisfying one, and will last for ever. And happy are those, who from their hearts, and with their souls, under a testimony of the Spirit of God to their spirits, and through a gracious experience of him, can say he is their portion and exceeding great reward, as the church here did; and these may say with her, as follows:

therefore will I hope in him: for deliverance from all evils and enemies; for present supplies of grace; and for the enjoyment of future glory and happiness.

Ver. 25. *The Lord [is] good to them that wait for him*, etc.] For the enjoyment of him as their portion in this world, and in that to come; for his presence here and hereafter; which they are sometimes now deprived of, but should wait patiently for it; since he has his set time to arise and favour them with it; to such is he “good” communicatively, and in a special way and manner. They that wait for him shall not be ashamed, or disappointed of what they expect; they shall renew their spiritual strength, and grow stronger and stronger; they shall inherit the earth, the new heavens and the new earth; enjoy many blessings now, and have good things laid up for them hereafter, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, (²³⁴²³ Isaiah 49:23 40:31 64:4 ²³⁴²⁴ Psalm 37:9); perhaps some regard may be had to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which the saints then expected, and were waiting for in faith and hope; to whom the Lord was good and gracious in due time, by performing the mercy promised them, (²³⁴²⁵ Isaiah 25:9);

to the soul [that] seeketh him; that seeketh him aright; that seeks him by prayer and supplication; that seeks him in his house and ordinances, where he is to be found; that seeks him early, in the first place, and above all things else; that seeks him earnestly, diligently, with his whole spirit, heart, and soul; that seeks his face, his favour, grace, and glory, and all in Christ, through whom all are to be enjoyed. God is good to such souls; he is a rewarder of them in a way of grace; with himself, as their shield and exceeding great reward; with his Son, and all things freely with him; with

his Spirit and graces, and with eternal glory and happiness; such find what they seek for, Christ, his grace, and eternal fire; the Lord never forsakes them, nor the work of his hand in them, and they shall live spiritually and eternally; (see ~~<8106>~~ Hebrews 11:6 ~~<1087>~~ Proverbs 8:17 ~~<1007>~~ Matthew 7:7 ~~<8007>~~ Romans 2:7 ~~<8910>~~ Psalm 9:10 69:32).

Ver. 26. *[It is] good that [a man] should both hope and quietly wait*, etc.].

This follows from the former; for if God is good to such, it must be good for them to hope and wait for him; it is both their duty and their interest: and it may be observed, that hope is the ground of patient waiting, and is here promised to it; where there is no hope of a thing, there will be no waiting for it, much less quietly: hope is of things unseen, future, difficult, and yet possible, or there would be no hope; and where there is that, there will be waiting; for “if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it”, (~~<8025>~~ Romans 8:25); here in the original text it is, “hope, and be silent”^{f72}; or, “a good man will both hope” or “wait, and be silent”^{f73}; that is, under the present dispensation, though an afflictive one; men should be still, as David exhorts, and be dumb, as he was; and hold their peace, as Aaron did, at such seasons: not that they should indulge a stoical apathy, or be insensible of their condition, and disregard the rod, and him that has appointed it, or be altogether silent and speechless; but should own the hand of God, and their deserts, cry to him for deliverance, be thankful it is no worse, and speak of the gracious dealings of God with them; yet should not murmur and complain, or charge God foolishly; but be resigned to his will, and wait the issue of Providence quietly, even wait

for the salvation of the Lord; for temporal deliverance from outward evils and present afflictions, and for spiritual and eternal salvation. The saints, under the Old Testament, waited for Christ, the author of salvation, appointed and promised by the Lord. He is come, and has obtained salvation, which is published in the Gospel. Sensible sinners are made acquainted with their need of it, and see the fulness and suitableness of it, and are earnestly desirous of knowing their interest in it; this is not immediately had; it is good to wait quietly for it, in an attendance on the word and ordinances; and this being come at, still the complete enjoyment is yet behind: saints are now heirs of it, are kept unto it; it is nearer them than when they believed; Christ will appear unto it, and it becomes them to wait patiently for it; which will be a salvation from the very being of sin; from the temptations of Satan; from all troubles inward and outward; from all troublesome persons and things; from all doubts, fears, darkness, and

unbelief; and will consist in perfect happiness and glory, and is worth waiting for.

Ver. 27. *[It is] good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*] Either the yoke of the commandments, as the Targum; or of correction, as Aben Ezra; of afflictions, as fatherly chastisements; both senses may be retained. It is good to bear the yoke of the moral law, or the commandments of God, as they are in the hands of Christ, a rule of walk and conversation; a yoke obliging all mankind, and especially saints; it is the duty of all to submit their necks to this yoke; it is but their reasonable service to love the Lord their God, and their neighbour as themselves; as must be judged by all but sons of Belial, who are without this yoke, having cast it off; and especially it is “good” to bear the yoke of Christ, to embrace his doctrines, and profess them, and submit to his ordinances, since his yoke is easy, and leads to true rest, (~~and~~ Matthew 11:29,30); it is commendable so to do; since it is a following Christ, and those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises; and, besides, is both pleasant and profitable, being the means of increasing spiritual strength, light, and joy: and it is right to do this “in youth”; which is the choices, time of life, and most acceptable to Christ, and when a man is capable of doing him most service; and especially, if men do not take upon them this yoke in the day of their espousals, and while their first love lasts, it is much if they ever do it after, and therefore should not neglect it: and so it is good to bear the yoke of afflictions, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, to take up the cross, and bear it after Christ, willingly, and cheerfully, and patiently; this is “good”, for hereby souls are brought to a sense of sin, to be humbled for it, and confess it; it is a means of purging from it, and preventing it; hereby the graces of the Spirit are tried, exercised, and become brighter; saints are instructed in many useful lessons in the word of God, in humility faith, and fear; herein they enjoy much of the presence of God, and all work for their good, spiritual and eternal. And as there is a close connection between a profession of faith in Christ, and submission to his ordinances, and suffering reproach and persecution for the same; it is good for a man to bear the one, as well as the other, “in his youth”; this will serve to keep him humble, and hide pride from him, which youth are addicted to; to wean him from the world, the lusts and pleasures of it, which are ensnaring to that age; to prevent many sins and evils such might be tempted to go into; and to inure them to hardships, and make them good soldiers of Christ.

Ver. 28. *He sitteth alone*, etc.] Retires from the world, and the men of it, who takes upon him the yoke of Christ; though he is not alone, but God, Father, Son, and Spirit, are with him; and he is with the saints, the excellent of the earth, and has communion with them; and so he is that under the afflicting hand of God bears it patiently, and does not run from place to place complaining of it, but sits still, and considers the cause, end, and use of it. Some render the words in connection with the preceding, it is good “that he sit alone”^{f74}; it is good for a man to be alone; in his closet, praying to God; in his house or chamber, reading the word of God; in the field, or elsewhere, meditating upon it, and upon the works of God, of nature, providence, and grace:

and keepeth silence, because he hath borne [it] on him: or, “took it on him”; either because he took it upon him willingly, and therefore should bear it patiently; or because he (God) hath put it upon him^{f75}, and therefore should be silent, and not murmur and repine, since he hath done it, (~~139~~ Psalm 39:9).

Ver. 29. *He putteth his mouth in the dust*, etc.] Of self-aborrence; sensible of his own vileness and nothingness, his unworthiness, and the unprofitableness of all his duties; ascribing the whole of his salvation to the free grace of God, (~~139~~ Job 42:6); humbling himself under the mighty hand of God; not daring to open his mouth in a complaining way against him; but prostrating himself before him to the earth, as the manner of the eastern people in prayer was, to which the allusion is; licking as it were the dust of the earth, under a sense of the distance and disproportion between God and him, who is but dust and ashes; so the Targum adds,

“and is prostrate before the Lord:”

if so be there may be hope; or, “peradventure there is hope”^{f76}; for, as some interpreters observe, these words do not express hesitation and doubt, but hope and expectation of help, to bear the yoke of God’s commandments, and in due time to be delivered from affliction and distress.

Ver. 30. *He giveth [his] cheek to him that smiteth him*, etc.] Either to God that afflicts him, and patiently bears it; (see ~~23~~ Isaiah 9:13); or rather to men. To be smitten on the cheek is always reckoned a very great affront; to turn the cheek to an injurious man is to give him an opportunity and leave

to smite, and signifies the taking of it patiently, and agrees both with our Lord's advice and example, (^{<416>}Matthew 5:39 ^{<2816>}Isaiah 50:6);

he is filled full with reproach; has many reproaches, and the reproaches of many upon him; as such must expect, that take Christ's yoke upon them; (see ^{<338>}Psalm 123:3,4); and yet revile not again, but esteem reproaches for Christ's sake great riches, and wear them as crowns, and bind them about their necks as chains of gold; esteeming it an honour and a happiness to suffer shame for his name.

Ver. 31. *For the Lord will not cast off for ever.*] Which is not to be understood of all his creatures; for there are some he does cast off for ever, as the angels that sinned; reprobate men, profligate and abandoned sinners, that live and die impenitent; and unbelievers, carnal professors, and apostates; but not his own special and peculiar people, the people whom he has foreknown and loved with an everlasting love, his spiritual Israel; or, as the Targum supplies it, "his servants"; (see ^{<944>}Psalm 94:14 ^{<5112>}Romans 11:2 ^{<2813>}Jeremiah 31:37 33:25,26); he may seem for a while to reject them, but not in reality and for ever; as when he hides his face from them, lays his afflicting hand on them, or suffers then, to be afflicted by others, and defers his help, and does not immediately appear to their deliverance and salvation; but in reality he never rejects them from being his people, his servants, and his sons; they have always a place in his heart, and are ever under his eye and care; they continue in his covenant, and abide in his family; and though they may be cast down in their souls, and cast out by men, yet are not cast off by God, neither in youth nor old age, in time or eternity; his love is unchangeable; his purposes firm and unalterable; his counsel, covenant, oath, and promise, immutable; and they are his jewels, his portion, and inheritance; and this is a ground and reason of bearing patiently all afflictions, injuries, and reproaches; for though men cast off, God will not.

Ver. 32. *But though he cause grief*, etc.] As he sometimes does in his own people; by convincing them of sin, and producing in them godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto life, not to be repented of; by correcting and chastising them for it, and by hiding his face from them; all which are grievous to them:

yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; his mercies are many, both temporal and spiritual, and his compassion is answerable; which he shows to his people by an application of pardoning

grace, through the blood of Christ, by sympathizing with them under their afflictions, and delivering from them; by granting them his gracious presence, and restoring to them the joys of his salvation; all which is not according to their merits, but his mercies.

Ver. 33. *For he doth not afflict willingly*, etc.] Or, “from his heart”¹⁷⁷; he does afflict; for all afflictions are from God, but they do not come from the mere motion of his heart, or are the effects of his sovereign will and pleasure, as the good things he bestows upon his people do, without any respect to any cause or occasion in them; but sin is the cause and occasion of these, as Jarchi well observes: it is with reluctance the Lord afflicts his people; he is as it were forced to it, speaking after the manner of men; (see ~~AKB~~ Hosea 11:8); he does not do it with delight and pleasure; he delights in mercy, but judgment is his strange act; nor does he do it with all his heart and soul, with all his might and strength; he does not stir up all his wrath: for then the spirit would fail before him, and the souls that he has made; and especially he does not do it out of ill will, but in love, and for their good:

nor grieve the children of men: that is, he does not from his heart, or willingly, grieve the children of men, by, afflicting them; which must be understood of those sons of men whom he has loved, and made his sons and heirs; those sons of men that wisdom’s delights were with from everlasting, (~~AKB~~ Proverbs 8:31).

Ver. 34. *To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.*] These words, with what follow in (~~AKB~~ Lamentations 3:35,36); either depend upon the preceding, and are to be connected with them, “he doth not afflict”, etc. (~~AKB~~ Lamentations 3:33); though he lays his hand on men, he do not crush them under his feet, or break them in pieces, and utterly destroy them, even such, and all such, as are bound in affliction and iron; or, in a spiritual sense, such as are prisoners to sin, Satan, and the law, as all men by nature are; he does not crush these to pieces, though they deserve it, at least not “all” of them; for he proclaims in the Gospel liberty to the captives, and says, by the power of his grace, to the prisoners, go forth, and encourages the prisoners of hope to turn to their strong hold: and also, though he afflicts, he does no injustice to them, does not turn aside their right, or subvert their cause, (~~AKB~~ Job 8:3 34:5,12); or rather these depend upon, and are to be connected with, the last clause of (~~AKB~~ Lamentations 3:36); “the Lord approveth not”: as he does not do these things himself, he

do not approve of them in others; that they should use captives cruelly, trample upon them like mire in the streets, or as the dust of their feet; particularly regard may be had to the Jews in Babylon, used ill by those that detained them; for though it was by the will of God they were carried captive, yet the Chaldeans exceeded due bounds in their usage of them, and added affliction to their affliction, which the Lord approved not of, but resented, (³⁰¹⁵Zechariah 1:15).

Ver. 35. *To turn aside the right of a man*, etc.] The Targum is, of a poor man; not to do him justice in a court of judicature; to cause judgment to incline to the wrong side; to give the cause against a man, to give a wrong sentence; this is disapproved of by the Lord, and forbidden by him:

before the face of the most High; either before the most high God, he being present and among the gods, the judges, when they pass sentence; and yet, to pass a wrong one in his presence, without any regard to him, or fear of him, must be provoking to him: or, “before a superior”^{f78}, as some render it; before a judge that sits upon the bench; endeavouring by unjust charges, wrong pleas, and false witnesses, to deprive a man of his right; (see ²⁰⁰⁸Ecclesiastes 5:8).

Ver. 36. *To subvert a man in his cause*, etc.] A poor man, as the Targum, which aggravates it; as by courses and methods taken in an open court, so by secret underhand ways, to get the cause from him, and injure him in his property:

the Lord approveth not; or, “seeth not”^{f79}; which some understand as spoken by wicked men, who do the above things, and flatter themselves that God sees not, and takes no notice of them, (³⁰⁰⁰Ezekiel 9:9); and others read it interrogatively, “doth not the Lord see?”^{f80} he does; he sees all the actions of men, nothing is hid from him; but he sees not with approbation; he do not look upon such things with delight and pleasure, but with abhorrence, (³⁰¹³Habakkuk 1:13). The Targum is,

“is it possible that it should not be revealed before the Lord?”

Ver. 37. *Who [is] he [that] saith, and it cometh to pass?* etc.] Or, “who [that] says [this shall be], and it cometh to pass?” or, “who [is] he [that] saith [this shall] come to pass?”^{f81} this, or that, or the other thing, he wills and desires, and his heart is set upon:

[when] the Lord commandeth [it] not? has not willed and decreed it, but determined the contrary; for nothing escapes his knowledge and foreknowledge; or can resist his will; or control his power; or frustrate his councils, and counterwork his designs; whatever schemes men form to get riches, obtain honour, do mischief to others, prolong life to themselves, and perpetuate their names to posterity, being contrary to the purpose of God, never succeed; whenever they do succeed in any of the above instances, it is because God has commanded, or he has determined, it should be so; as in the instances of Joseph's brethren, in their usage of him; and of the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ, (~~3160~~ Proverbs 16:9 19:21). The Targum is,

“who is the man that saith, and evil is done in the world; but because they have done what was not commanded from the mouth of the Lord?”

Ver. 38. *Out of the mouth of the most High proceed not evil and good?*] Certainly they do; they come to pass, both one and the other, as God has pronounced, and his will determined; even “evils”, as it is in the plural number; not the evil of sin, or of fault; this comes not out of the mouth of God, but is forbidden and condemned by him; much less is he the author of it, or tempter to it; indeed it is not without his knowledge, nor in some sense without his will; not with his will of approbation, but by his permissive will, which he suffers to be, and overrules for good; but evils here design the judgments of God, or punishment inflicted on sinners, and chastisement on his own people; the evil of affliction, or adverse dispensations of providence, (~~2850~~ Isaiah 45:7 ~~3086~~ Amos 3:6 ~~3160~~ Micah 6:9); they are all by his appointment; he has said or determined what shall be the kind and nature of them; the measure, how far they shall go; and the duration, how long they shall last; and the end and use of them; (see ~~820~~ Job 2:10 5:6,7 23:14); and so all good comes from God, who is goodness itself; all created good, as every creature of God is good; every good thing in providence; all temporal good things; as to have a being; to be preserved in it; to have a habitation to dwell in; to have food and raiment, health and long life; these are all by the appointment of God, and according to the determination of his will: all spiritual good things are purposed, promised, and prepared by him in council and covenant; the great good of all, salvation by Christ; this is what God has appointed his son for, and his people to, and fixed the time of it, and all things relating to it; the effectual calling of the redeemed ones is according to his purpose and grace; the

persons, thing itself, time, place, and means; also eternal glory and happiness, which is the kingdom prepared, the crown laid up, and inheritance reserved in heaven, according to the purpose of God; all good things, in time and eternity, are as God has pronounced them.

Ver. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain?* etc.] Or murmur, or fret and vex, or bemoan himself; all which the word ^{f82} may signify; as the prophet had done in his own person; or as representing the church, (~~ARL~~ Lamentations 3:1-19); and here checks himself for it; and especially since the mercies and compassions of God never fail, and are daily renewed; and the Lord himself is the portion of his people, (~~ARL~~ Lamentations 3:23,24); and seeing he is good to them that seek him, and it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of God, and to bear the yoke patiently, (~~ARL~~ Lamentations 3:25-27); and because of the unwillingness of God to afflict men, and his sympathy and compassion towards them under affliction, (~~ARL~~ Lamentations 3:32,33); and especially since all is from the sovereignty of God, who does according to his will; and from whom all good and evil come, (~~ARL~~ Lamentations 3:37,38); he is not to be complained of, or against, for anything he does; or to be murmured at; nor should men vex and fret themselves at their own adversity, or at the prosperity of others; or bemoan themselves, as if no case was like theirs, or so bad. It does not become “a man”, a reasonable creature, a man grown up, to behave in this manner; as such should quit themselves like men, and conduct as such; a “man” that God is so mindful of, and cares for, and visits every moment, and follows with his goodness continually; a “man”, sinful man, that has rendered himself unworthy of the least favour; and yet such is the lovingkindness, favour, and good will of God to man, that he has provided his own Son to be his Saviour; and therefore man, of all God’s creatures, has no reason to complain of him; and is a “living” man too, in a natural sense; is upheld in life by the Lord, and has the common mercies of life; is in health, or however in the land of the living; out of hell, where he deserves to be; and therefore should praise, and not complain, (~~ARL~~ Isaiah 38:19); especially if he is a living man in a spiritual sense; has a principle of spiritual life implanted in him; Christ lives in him, and his life is hid with him in God, and has a right and title to eternal life:

a man for [the punishment] of his sins? the word “punishment” is not in the text; but, admitting the supplement, if a man is a wicked man (and so the Targum interprets it), and is punished for his sins, no injustice is done him; he has no reason to complain; and especially of his punishment in this

world, which is greatly less than his sins deserve, (¹⁹¹³Ezra 9:13); and if he is a good man, and is chastised for his sins, he ought not to complain “for the chastisement” of them; since it is the chastisement of a father, is in love, and for his good: but the words may be rendered literally, “a man for”, or “of his sins”^{f83}; and be considered as a distinct clause, and as an answer to the former, so Jarchi; if a man will complain, let him complain of his sins; of the corruptions of his heart; of the body of sin and death he carries about with him of his daily iniquities; let him mourn over them, and bemoan himself for them; and if he does this in an evangelic manner, he is happy; for he shall be comforted.

Ver. 40. *Let us search and try our ways*, etc.] stead of murmuring and complaining, let us search for something that may support and comfort, teach and instruct, under afflictive providences; let us search into the love of God, which, though it cannot be fully searched out, it will be found to be from everlasting to everlasting; and that all afflictions spring from it; and that it continues notwithstanding them: let us search into the covenant of grace, in which provision is made for afflictions in case of disobedience, and for supports under them: let us search the Scriptures, which are written for our comfort; and it is much if we do not find some in the instances, examples, and experiences of other saints therein recorded: let us search after a greater degree of the knowledge of Christ, and of his grace; so shall we be more conformable to his sufferings and death, and patient under our troubles: let us search into our own hearts, and examine ourselves, whether we have true repentance for sin, true faith in Christ; and whether he is in us, or not; and we have a part in him, which will make us easy in every state: let us search into the present dispensation, in order to find out the cause of it, which is sin; and the end of it, which God has in it for our good: let us search “our ways”, and “try them”, by the word of God, the standard of faith and practice; and see what agreement there is between them: let us try our thoughts, words, and actions, by the law of God, which is holy, spiritual, just, and good; and we shall see how abundantly short they come of it: and let us try “our ways”, and compare them with the ways of God, which he has prescribed in his word; and we shall find that the one are holy, the other unholy; the one plain, the other crooked; the one dark, the other light; the one pleasant, and peace is in them, the other not; the one lead to life, the other to death; (see ²⁵⁰Isaiah 55:7-9);

and turn again to the Lord; by repentance, as the Targum adds; let us turn out of our sinful ways, upon a search and examination of them; and turn to

the Lord, his ways and worship, from whom we have departed, and against whom we have sinned; acknowledging our iniquities, who receives graciously, is ready to forgive, and does abundantly pardon.

Ver. 41. *Let us lift up our heart with [our] hands*, etc.] Lifting up of the hands is a prayer gesture, and is put for prayer itself; (see ^{<4910>}Psalm 141:2 ^{<4918>}1 Timothy 2:8); but the heart must go along with it, or it is of no avail; the soul must be lifted up to God; there must be an ascending of that unto him, in earnest desires after him; in affection and love to him; in faith and dependence on him; and in hope and expectation of good things from him, (^{<4921>}Psalm 25:1); this is the way in which men return to God, even by prayer and supplication. The Targum is,

“let us lift up our hearts, and cast away rapine and prey out of our hands;”

and Jarchi and Abendana mention a Midrash, that paraphrases it,

“let us lift up our hearts in truth to God, as a man washes his hands in purity, and casts away all filthiness from them;”

(see ^{<5012>}Hebrews 10:22);

unto God in the heavens; who has made them, and dwells in them; and therefore prayer must be directed to him, as being there; so our Lord taught his disciples to pray, (^{<4019>}Matthew 6:9); and which is a very great encouragement to faith in prayer; when it is considered that God is the Maker and possessor of heaven and earth; and that our help is in and expected from him who made all these; and besides the saints have a High Priest, an Advocate with the Father there, to plead their cause for them; and many great and good things are there laid up for them.

Ver. 42. *We have transgressed, and have rebelled*, etc.] Here begins the prayer, the sense of which is directed to, though the words are not dictated; and it begins with confession of sin, as prayer should, especially when in such circumstances as the people of the Jews now were; and with confession of it, as a transgression of the law of God; and as rebellion against him, as every sin is, a breach of his law, a contempt of his authority, and a trampling under foot his legislative power, and an act of hostility against him; and so downright rebellion; every sin being an overt act of that kind; and which is aggravated by the favours before acknowledged to have been received:

thou hast not pardoned; as they apprehended; they had not the discovery and application of pardoning grace and mercy; otherwise pardon of sin with God is past, and includes all sin present and future, as well as past; but temporal afflictions being upon them, they concluded their sins were not pardoned; pardon of sin in Scripture often signifying the removal of such afflictions.

Ver. 43. *Thou hast covered with anger*, etc.] Either himself; not as a tender father, that cannot bear to see the affliction of a child; this does not suit with anger; but rather as one greatly displeased, in whose face anger appears, being covered with it; or who covers his face with it, that he may not be seen, withdrawing his gracious presence; or hast put anger as a wall between thee and us, as Jarchi: so that there was no coming nigh to him: or else it means covering his people with it; so the Targum,

“thou hast covered “us” with anger;”

denoting the largeness and abundance of afflictions upon them; they were as it were covered with them, as tokens of the divine displeasure; one wave and billow after another passing over them. Sanctius thinks the allusion is to the covering of the faces of condemned malefactors, as a token of their being guilty:

and persecuted us; the Targum adds, in captivity; that is, pursued and followed us with fresh instances of anger and resentment; to have men to be persecutors is bad, but to have God to be a persecutor is dreadful:

thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied; had suffered them to be slain by the sword of the enemy, and had shown no compassion to them; (see Gill on “~~2502~~ Lamentations 2:21”); here, and in some following verses, the prophet, or the people he represents, are got to complaining again; though before he had checked himself for it; so hard it is under afflictions to put in practice what should be done by ourselves and others.

Ver. 44. *Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud*, etc.] With wrath and anger, as a cloud; he wrapped up himself in thick darkness, so as not to be seen or come at: sin, when it appears not pardoned, is as a cloud between God and his people; and this causes him to show his anger and displeasure; which is the cloud about him, Or the hiding of his face. The Targum is,

“thou hast covered the heavens with the clouds of thy glory:”

that [our] prayer should not pass through; in such circumstances God seems to his people to be inexorable; and not a God hearing and answering prayer, as he is; as if there was no access unto him, or audience to be had of him, or acceptance of persons and prayers with him; whereas the throne of grace is always open and accessible: and there is a new and living way for believers always to approach unto God in; he is on a mercy seat, ready to receive and hear their prayers.

Ver. 45. *Thou hast made us [as] the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.*] Had given them up into the hands of the Gentiles, the Chaldeans, to be treated as the dirt of the streets, as the sweepings of a house; or the dross of metal; or anything that is vile, mean, and contemptible. The apostle seems to have some reference to this passage; and his words may be an illustration of it, (~~40413~~ 1 Corinthians 4:13).

Ver. 46. *All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.*] Like lions and other beasts of prey, to devour us; or in way of scorn and derision; pouring out their reproaches upon us, and scoffs at us, for our religion, and the worship of God, and on account of present miseries and distresses; (see ~~2916~~ Lamentations 2:16). The Targum adds,

“to decree against us evil decrees.”

Ver. 47. *Fear and a snare is come upon us*, etc.] Or, “fear and a pit” ^{f84}; the fear of falling into the pit of ruin and destruction, on the brink of which they saw themselves; or fear seized us, and caused us to flee; and a snare or pit was prepared for us to fall into; so that there was no escaping hence:

desolation and destruction; desolation or devastation of their land; and destruction of their city and temple; and of multitudes of them by the sword, famine, and pestilence; and the rest carried into captivity, excepting a few left desolate in the land.

Ver. 48. *Mine eye runneth down with rivers of waters*, etc.] Denoting the greatness of his grief and trouble at the afflictions of his people, and the vast profusion of tears on that account. Here the prophet speaks in his own person, expressing the anguish of his soul he felt, and the floods of tears he shed:

for the destruction of the daughter of my people; for those that were slain of them, or carried captive; (see ~~2491~~ Jeremiah 9:1 ~~49136~~ Psalm 119:136). The Targum is,

“for the destruction of the congregation of my people.”

Ver. 49. *Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not*, etc.] From weeping, as the Targum: the prophet was continually weeping; the distresses of his people were always uppermost in his mind; and which so affected him, that it drew tears from his eyes, which constantly trickled down his cheeks:

without any intermission; or, “without intermissions”^{f85}; there were no stops or pauses in his grief, and in the expressions of it: or it may be rendered, “because [there were] no intermissions”^{f86}; that is, of the miseries of his people; so Jarchi,

“because there were no changes and passing away;”

that is of evils; and to the same purpose the Targum,

“because there is none that intermits my distress, and speaks comforts to me.”

Ver. 50. *Till the Lord look do: on, and behold from heaven*.] Disperses and dissipates the cloud that was about him; shines forth and manifests himself, and looks favourably upon his people, and delivers them out of their troubles: this the prophet was in hope of, and was waiting for; but, till it came to pass, could have no rest and comfort. The Targum is,

“till he look and behold my injury;”

as if he had regard to his own personal injury done him; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 51. *Mine eye affecteth mine heart*, etc.] Seeing the desolation of his country; the ruins of the city and temple of Jerusalem; and the multitudes of those that were slain, and carried captive; and the distresses the rest were in; this affected his heart, and filled it with grief; as his heart also affected his eyes, and caused them to run down in rivers of water, as before expressed; or, as the Targum,

“the weeping of mine eyes is the occasion of hurt to my soul or life;”

his excessive weeping endangered his life:

because of all the daughters of my city; not Anathoth, his native place, but Jerusalem; so the Targum,

“of Jerusalem my city.”

The meaning is, that his heart was affected at seeing the ruin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or of the towns and cities round about it, which that was the metropolis of. Some, as Jarchi, render it, “more than all the daughters of my city”^{f87}; his heart was more affected with those calamities than those of the most tender sex, even than any or all of them.

Ver. 52. *Mine enemies chased me sore like a bird*, etc.] That is weak and helpless, fearful and timorous; that flees from place to place when pursued; so it was with the prophet, or rather with the people of the Jews he represents; for here and in the following verses he speaks not only of himself, but of them; who, when they fled out of the city, were chased and pursued by the Chaldeans like a bird, till they were taken; (see ^{<3507>}Jeremiah 52:7-9);

without cause; which may be connected with the word “enemies”, so the Targum; who were so without cause; they had done them no injury, to make them their enemies; and without reason pursued and chased them in the manner they did.

Ver. 53. *They have cut off my life in the dungeon*, etc.] Jarchi interprets it, “they bound me in the prison.”

Jeremiah was both in a prison and in a dungeon, where he was deprived of the society of men, as if he had been dead; and he was in danger of losing his life; but whether any respect is had to it here is not certain: it seems rather to respect the people of the Jews in captivity, who were deprived of their rights and liberties, and of the comforts of life; and were like dead men in their graves, to whom they are compared, (^{<3571>}Ezekiel 37:11); but since Jeremiah was not dead, nor did he die in the dungeon, Jarchi’s sense seems best, and agrees with what follows; and is confirmed by the version of others, who render it, “they shut up my life in the dungeon”^{f88}; or himself there:

and cast a stone upon me; to see if he was dead, or to prevent him from rising. The allusion is to the putting of stones at the mouths of dens and dungeons, caves and graves, to keep in those there put: or they stoned me, as the Targum; that is, they endeavoured to do it: or the Jews in captivity were like persons stoned to death, or like dead men covered with a heap of stones; for that Jeremiah was stoned to death there is no reason to believe.

Ver. 54. *Waters flowed over mine head*, etc.] As in a pit or dungeon, where there is not only mire and clay, but much water, into which persons being put, sink, and are covered therewith; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 69:1,2); this is to be understood metaphorically of the waters of afflictions, which overflowed and overwhelmed the people of the Jews. Jarchi interprets it of the nations of the world, as much people are often compared to waters; and here the Chaldeans may be particularly intended, whose army overflowed the land of Judea; and, like a mighty torrent, carried away the people, and wealth of it, and brought them into troubles, which were like deep waters:

[then] I said, I am cut off; while the waters are only up to a man's loins, he does not apprehend himself in danger; but there is hope of his wading through, and getting out; but when they rise above his head, his hopes are gone; he reckons it all over with him, and that he is just perishing, and his life in the utmost danger; there being scarce any probability or possibility of saving him; so it was with these people.

Ver. 55. *I called upon thy name, O Lord*, etc.] As in times past, so in the present distress; when all hope was gone, and all help failed, still there was a God to go to, and call upon:

out of the low dungeon; or “dungeon of lownesses”^{f89}; the lowest dungeon, the deepest distress, a man or people could be in; yet then and there it is not too late to call upon the Lord; and there may be hope of deliverance out of such an estate by him.

Ver. 56. *Thou hast heard my voice*, etc.] Either in times past, when he cried unto him, and was delivered; and this was an encouragement to call upon him again in such extremity, who had shown himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer; hence it follows:

hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry; turn not a deaf ear to me, who hast been wont to hear me heretofore; stop not thine ear at my cry now, at my prayer, which he calls his “breathing”; prayer is the breath of a soul regenerated by the Spirit, and is a sign and evidence of life, when it is spiritual; in it a soul pants after God, and communion with him, and salvation by him. Some render it, “at my gasping”^{f90}; or “panting”, for breath; just ready to expire, unless immediate help is given: or else the whole of this refers to the present time, when the Lord heard and answered, not only the first clause, but this also; which may be rendered,

not by way of petition, but affirmation, “thou didst not hide thine ear at my breathing, at my cry”^{f91}; and this agrees both with what goes before, and with what is expressed in (~~2315~~ Lamentations 3:57).

Ver. 57. *Thou drewest near in the day [that] I called upon thee*, etc.]

When persons draw nigh to God in a way of duty, and particularly in this of prayer, and calling on his name; he draws nigh to them in a way of grace and mercy, and manifests himself to them, and works salvation for them. The Targum is,

“thou didst cause an angel to draw near to deliver me in the day that I prayed unto thee:”

thou saidst, fear not; any of thine enemies; or that thou shouldest not be delivered from them; (see ~~23410~~ Isaiah 41:10).

Ver. 58. *O Lord, thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul*, etc.] Or, causes of “my soul”, or “life”^{f92}; such as concerned his soul and life: not one only, but many of them; and this respects not Jeremiah only, and the Lord’s pleading his cause against Zedekiah and his nobles; but the people of the Jews in former times, when in Egypt, and in the times of the judges:

thou hast redeemed my life; by delivering out of the pit and dungeon, where it was in danger; and not only him, but the whole body of the people of old out of Egypt, and out of the hands of their enemies, the Philistines and others.

Ver. 59. *O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong*, etc.] Or, “my perverseness”^{f93}; not that he or they had been guilty of; but the wrong that was done to him and them by their enemies; how perverse and ill natured they had been to them; how badly they had used them; what injuries they had done them; none of which escaped the omniscience of God, to which the appeal is made; and upon this follows a petition:

judge thou my cause; the present one; as thou hast pleaded and judged many already, do me justice, right my wrongs, an, save me from mine enemies; and let it appear to all the world my cause is just, and they are in the wrong.

Ver. 60. *Thou hast seen all their vengeance*, etc.] The spirit of revenge in them; their wrath and fury, and how they burn with a desire of doing mischief; as well as their revengeful actions, carriage, and behaviour:

[and] all their imaginations against me; their secret contrivances of mischief, their plots and schemes they devise to do hurt unto me.

Ver. 61. *Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord,* etc.] Their reproachful words uttered against the prophet and his people, against God himself; their spiteful language, their taunts, and scoffs and jeers:

[and] all their imaginations against me; those he not only saw, as they appeared in their actions; but heard them, as they were expressed by their words; yea, they were manifest to him, while they only were in silent thought forming in the mind.

Ver. 62. *The lips of those that rose up against me,* etc.] This is to be connected with the preceding words; and expresses the same thing in different language. The sense is, that the Lord heard the words which dropped from the lips of his enemies; their sarcasms, flouts, and jeers; their bitter reflections, severe invectives, and scornful language:

and their device against me all the day; or, “their meditation of ill against me”; or, “their speech”, or discourse^{f94}; which all turned upon the same topic. Schultens^{f95} derives the word from the Arabic word which signifies to mock and scoff, or pursue anyone with ironical and satirical expressions; and so may intend here contumelious and reproachful language.

Ver. 63. *Behold their sitting down, and their rising up,* etc.] All their actions; the whole course of their lives; all which fell under the divine omniscience, (^{OLD}Psalm 139:2); but that is not barely here meant; but that he would take particular notice hereof, and punish for the same. It may have respect both to their lying down at night, and rising in the morning; and to their sitting down at meals, and rising from them; at which times they were always meditating mischief against the people of God, or speaking opprobriously of them; when they made sport of them, as follows:

I [am] their music; or “music maker”^{f96}; as Samson was to the Philistines; the matter of their mirth; the subject of their song; and the object of their derision.

Ver. 64. *Render unto them a recompence, O Lord, according to the work of their hands.*] The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render this, and the following verses, not as petitions, but as prophecies of what should be; but they seem rather to be expressed by way of request; and here, that God would deal with them according to the law of retaliation, and requite them

according to what they had done; that he would do to them as they had done to the Lord's people, and others; and this is ordered to be done particularly to the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, (²⁸¹⁵Jeremiah 50:15,29).

Ver. 65. *Give them sorrow of heart*, etc.] That which will cause sorrow of heart; such judgments and punishments as will be grievous to them. Some have observed a likeness between the word here used and that translated “music”, (²⁸¹³Lamentations 3:63); and think some respect may be had to it; that whereas the people of God had been matter of mirth and music to them, God would give them music, but of another sort; a song, but a doleful one. The Septuagint version renders it, “a covering of the heart”; the word ¹⁹⁷ having the signification of a shield, which covers; and may signify blindness, hardness, and stupidity of heart, that they might not see the evils coming upon them, and how to escape them. A modern learned interpreter, Christianus Benedictus Michaelis, would have it compared with the Arabic word <Arabic>, “ganan”, which signifies “to be mad”, and from whence is “muganah”, “madness”; and so the sense be, give them distraction of mind:

lay curse unto them: and what greater curse is there than to be given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, or to madness and distraction? it may include all the curses of the law denounced against transgressors.

Ver. 66. *Persecute and destroy them in anger*, etc.] As they have persecuted the people of God, do thou persecute them; and never leave pursuing them untill thou hast made a full end of them, as the effect of vindictive wrath and vengeance:

from under the heavens of the Lord; which are made by him, and in which he dwells; let them not have the benefit of them, nor so much as the sight of them; but let them perish from under them, (²⁴⁰¹Jeremiah 10:11).

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 4

The prophet begins this chapter with a complaint of the ill usage of the dear children of God, and precious sons of Zion, (^{<2901>}Lamentations 4:1,2); relates the dreadful effects of the famine during the siege of Jerusalem, (^{<2903>}Lamentations 4:3-10); the taking and destruction of that city he imputes to the wrath of God; and represents it as incredible to the kings and inhabitants of the earth, (^{<2904>}Lamentations 4:11,12); the causes of which were the sins of the prophets, priests, and people, (^{<2905>}Lamentations 4:13-16); expresses the vain hopes they once had, but now were given up entirely, their king being taken, (^{<2907>}Lamentations 4:17-20); and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy of the destruction of the Edomites, and of the return of the Jews from captivity, (^{<2902>}Lamentations 4:21,22).

Ver. 1. *How is the gold become dim!* etc.] Or “covered” ^{f98}; or hid with rust, dust, or dirt; so that it can scarcely be discerned:

[how] is the most fine gold changed! this may be literally true of the gold of the temple; and so the Targum calls it

“the gold of the house of the sanctuary;”

with which that was overlaid, and many things in it, (^{<1021>}1 Kings 6:21,22); and was sadly sullied and tarnished with the burning of the temple, and the rubbish of it: its brightness was lost, and its colour changed; but though there may be an allusion to that, it is to be figuratively understood of the people of God; for what is here expressed in parabolical phrases, as Aben Ezra observes, is in (^{<2902>}Lamentations 4:2) explained in proper and literal ones: godly and gracious men, there called the precious sons of Zion, are comparable to gold, even the most fine gold; partly because of their habit and dress; gold of Ophir; clothing of wrought gold; the rich robe of Christ’s righteousness; which, for its brightness and splendour, is like the finest gold; and is as lasting and durable as that; and in which the saints look like a mass of pure gold, (^{<1951>}Psalms 45:9,13); and partly because of the graces of the Spirit in them, which are like gold for their purity, especially when tried; for their value, and the enriching nature of them, and

their duration; particularly the graces of faith, hope, love, humility, which are like rows of jewels, and chains of gold, and as ornamental as they; (see ~~<2010>~~ Song of Solomon 1:10,11 ~~<4007>~~ 1 Peter 1:7 ~~<4018>~~ Revelation 3:18); as also because of the doctrines of grace received by them, which are more to be desired than gold, than fine gold; and are better than thousands of gold and silver, by reason of their intrinsic worth and value; for their purity and brightness, being tried and purified, and because of their duration, (~~<1910>~~ Psalm 19:10 119:72 ~~<4012>~~ 1 Corinthians 3:12); as well as on account of the riches of grace and glory they are possessed of, and entitled to: now this, in either of the senses of it, cannot be lost as to substance, only become dim; may lose its brightness and glory, and like gold change its colour, but not its nature; and; this may be the case of good men, comparable to it; when there is a decline in them, with respect to the exercise of grace; faith in Christ and his righteousness is low, hope not lively, and love waxen cold; when there is a veil drawn over the Gospel, a great opposition to it, and a departure from it; or the doctrines of it are not so clearly and consistently preached; and when there is a failure in a holy walk, and conversation becoming it; all which is matter of lamentation:

the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street; in the literal sense it may regard the costly stones of the temple, which, when that was destroyed, not only lay in heaps; but many of them, at least, were separated and scattered about, and carried into every corner of the city, and the streets of it, and there lay exposed, neglected, and trampled upon; (see ~~<1157>~~ 1 Kings 5:17 ~~<4113>~~ Mark 13:1,2); but, in the figurative sense, it designs the people of God; who, though they are taken out of the common quarry and pit of mankind, and are by nature as common stones; yet by the Spirit and grace of God are made living and lively ones, and are hewn and fitted for the spiritual building the church; where they are laid, and are as the stones of a crown, as jewels and precious stones; but when there are animosities, contentions, and divisions among them, so that they disunite, and are scattered from one another, their case is like these stones of the sanctuary; and which is to be lamented. It is by some Jewish writers ^{f99} interpreted of great personages, as princes, and great men of the earth.

Ver. 2. *The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold*, etc.] This explains what is meant in (~~<2001>~~ Lamentations 4:1); by gold, fine gold, and stones of the sanctuary; not Josiah and his sons, as some Jewish interpreters; but all the sons of Zion, or children of God; not the inhabitants of Zion literally, but spiritually; (see ~~<3013>~~ Zechariah 9:13 ~~<4912>~~ Psalm 149:2).

Zion is the church; her sons are her spiritual seed and offspring that are born of her, she being the mother of them all, and born in her, by means of the word; and brought up by her, through the ordinances, and so are regenerate persons; and these the sons of God: and who are “precious”, not in themselves, being of the fallen race of Adam; of the earth, earthly, as he was; of the same mass and lump with the rest of mankind; in no wise better than others, by nature; and have no intrinsic worth and value in them, but what comes by and from the grace of God; nor are they precious in their own esteem, and much less in the esteem of the men of the world; but in the eye of God, and of his son Jesus Christ, and of the blessed Spirit, and in the opinion of other saints; (see ^{<1916>}Psalm 16:3 ^{<2304>}116:15 ^{<2304>}Isaiah 43:4); in what sense these are comparable to fine gold, (see Gill on ^{<2401>}Lamentations 4:1”);

how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! they are indeed earthen vessels with respect to their bodies, frail, weak, and mortal; but they are the work of God’s hands, even as creatures, and particularly as new creatures, and are a curious piece of his workmanship, and so valuable, and especially by him, who is as tender and as careful of them as the apple of his eye; and yet these are greatly disesteemed by carnal men, are reckoned as the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things; as earthen vessels, fit for no use but common or dishonourable ones, or to be broke in pieces, and rendered useless and contemptible: (see ^{<1812>}Psalm 31:12).

Ver. 3. *Even the sea monsters draw out the breast*, etc.] Which some interpret of dragons; others of seals, or sea calves; but it is best to understand it of whales, as the word is rendered in (^{<0021>}Genesis 1:21); and elsewhere: and Bochart ^{f100} has proved, out of various writers, that these have breasts and milk; but that their breasts, or however their paps, are not manifest, but are hid as in cases, and must be drawn out: and so Jarchi observes that they draw their breasts out of a case, for their breasts have a covering, which they uncover: so Ben Melech. Aristotle ^{f101} says, that whales, as the dolphin, sea calf, and balaena, have breasts or paps, and milk, which he makes to be certain species of the whale; and each of these, he elsewhere says, have milk, and suckle their young: the dolphin and sturgeon, he observes ^{f102} have milk, and are sucked; and so the sea calf, he says ^{f103}, lets out milk as a sheep, and has two breasts, and is sucked by its young, as four footed beasts are. Agreeably to which Aelianus ^{f104} relates, that the female dolphins have paps like women, and suckle their young,

with great plenty of milk; and the balaena, he says ^{f105}, is a creature like a dolphin, and has milk. And Pliny, speaking of the dolphins, observes ^{f106}, that they bring forth their “whelps”, and so the young of this creature are called here in the next clause in the Hebrew text ^{f107}, and nourish them with their breasts, as the balaena; and of the sea calves the same writer says ^{f108} they feed their young with their paps; but the paps of these creatures are not manifest, as those of four footed beasts, as Aristotle observes; but are like two channels or pipes, out of which the milk flows, and the young are suckled;

they give suck to their young ones; as they do, when they are hungry; which is mentioned, as an aggravation of the case of the Jewish women, with respect to their behaviour towards their children, by reason of the famine, during the siege of Jerusalem; which here, and in the following verses, is described in the sad effects of it; and which had a further accomplishment at the destruction of the same city by the Romans: now, though the monsters suckled their young when hungry, yet these women did not suckle theirs;

the daughter of my people [is become] cruel; or, is “unto a cruel one” ^{f109}: that is, is changed unto a cruel one, or is like unto one, and behaves as such, though of force and necessity: the meaning is, that the Jewish women, though before tenderhearted mothers, yet, by reason of the famine, having no milk in their breasts, could give none to their children, and so acted as if they were cruel to them; nay, in fact, instead of feeding them, they fed upon them, (~~<2010>~~ Lamentations 4:10);

like the ostriches in the wilderness; which lay their eggs, and leave them in places easily to be crushed and broken; and when they have any young ones, they are hardened against them, as if they were none of theirs, (~~<18913>~~ Job 39:13-17); and this seemed now to be the case of these women; or, “like the owls”, as the word is sometimes rendered; and which also leave their eggs, and for want of food will eat their young, as those women did. So Ben Melech says, it is a bird which dwells in the wilderness, and causes a voice of hooping to be heard.

Ver. 4. *The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst*, etc.] Through want of the milk of the breast, which is both food and drink unto it:

the young children ask bread; of their parents as usual, not knowing how the case was, that there was a famine in the city; these are such as were more grown, were weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts, and lived on other food, and were capable of asking for it:

[and] no man breaketh [it] unto them: distributes unto them, or gives them a piece of bread; not father, friend, or any other person; it not being in their power to do it, they having none for themselves.

Ver. 5. *They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets*, etc.] That were brought up in the king's palace, or in the houses of noblemen; or, however, born of parents rich and wealthy, and had been used to good living, and had fared sumptuously and deliciously every day, were now wandering about in the streets in the most forlorn and distressed condition, seeking for food of any sort, but could find none to satisfy their hunger; and so, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, perished in the ways or streets:

they that were brought up in scarlet: in dyed garments, as Jarchi; clothed with scarlet coloured ones, as was the manner of the richer and better sort of people, (~~2121~~ Proverbs 31:21); or, "brought up upon scarlet"^{f110}; upon scarlet carpets, on which they used to sit and eat their food, as is the custom of the eastern people to this day: these

embrace dunghills, are glad of them, and with the greatest eagerness rake into them, in order to find something to feed upon, though ever so base and vile; or to sit and lie down upon. Aben Ezra interprets it of their being cast here when dead, and there was none to bury them.

Ver. 6. *For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people*, etc.] In the long siege of their city, and the evils that attended it, especially the sore famine:

is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom; which was destroyed at once by fire from heaven: or it may be rendered, "the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom"^{f111}; though the men of Sodom were great sinners, the Jews were greater, their sins being more aggravated; to this agrees the Targum, which renders the word "sin", and paraphrases the words following thus,

"and there dwelt not in her prophets to prophesy unto her, and turn her by repentance;"

as the Jews had, and therefore their sin was the greater; both senses are true, and the one is the foundation of the other; but the first seems best to agree with what follows:

that was overthrown as in a moment; by a shower of fire from heaven, which consumed it at once; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem was a lingering one, through a long and tedious siege; the inhabitants were gradually wasted and consumed by famine, pestilence, and sword, and so their punishment greater than Sodom's:

and no hand stayed on her; that is, on Sodom; the hand of God was immediately upon her, and dispatched her at once, but not the hands of men; as the hands of the Chaldeans were upon the Jews, afflicting and distressing them a long time, which made their ease the worse.

Ver. 7. *Her Nazarites were purer than snow*, etc.] Such who separated themselves by a vow to the Lord, and abstained from drinking wine and strong drink, and by a moderate diet, and often washing themselves, as well as taking great care of their hair, appeared very neat and comely, like snow, without any spot or blemish. Some think such as were separated from others in dignity, very honourable persons, the sons of nobles, are meant, since the word has the signification of a "crown", and interpret it, her princes; Jarchi makes mention of this sense, and rejects it; but it is received by many: and the meaning is, that her young noblemen, who were well fed, and neatly dressed, looked as pure and as beautiful as the driven snow:

they were whiter than milk; this intends the same thing, expressed by another metaphor:

they were more ruddy in body than rubies; or rather "than precious stones"; and particularly "than pearls", which Bochart^{f112} proves at large are designed by the word used, which are white, and not red; and the word should be rendered, "clearer" or "whiter than pearls", as it is by Lyra and others^{f113}; and the word in the Arabic language signifies white and clear^{f114}, as pearls are; and so the phrase is expressive of the beauty and comeliness of these persons: and Ludolphus^{f115} says, that in the Ethiopic language it signifies "beautiful"; and he translates the whole, "they were more beautiful than pearls"; denoting the clearness of their skins, and the goodness of their complexion:

their polishing [was] of sapphire; or “their cutting, sapphire”^{f116}; they were as beautiful as if they had been cut out of sapphire, and polished; which is a very precious stone, and looks very beautiful; so smooth were their skins. The Targum is,

“their face or countenance is as sapphire.”

Braunius^{f117} thinks the word used signifies the veins full of blood, which variously intersect the flesh like sapphirine rivers; and that the sense of the words is,

“their bodies were white like snow and milk, yea, shining like pearls (or red in the cheeks, lips, etc. like coral^{f118}); veins full of blood running between like sapphire, of a most agreeable sky colour; which is, a true description of a most fair and beautiful body.”

(see ²¹⁵⁴Song of Solomon 5:14). All this is to be understood of them before the famine, but, when that came upon them, then they were as follow:

Ver. 8. *Their visage is blacker than a coal*, etc.] Or, “darker than blackness”; or, “dark through blackness”^{f119}; by reason of the famine, and because of grief and trouble for themselves and their friends, which changed their complexions, countenances, and skins; they that looked before as pure as snow, as white as milk, as clear as pearls, as polished as sapphire, now as black as charcoal, as blackness itself:

they are not known in the streets; not taken notice of in a distinguished manner; no respect shown them as they walk the streets, as used to be; nay, their countenances were so altered, and their apparel so sordid, as not to be known by their friends, when they met them in public:

their skin cleaveth to their bones; have nothing but skin and bone, who used to be plump and fat:

it is withered, it is become like a stick; the skin wrinkled and shrivelled up, the flesh being gone; and the bone became like a stick, or a dry piece of wood, its moisture and marrow being dried up.

Ver. 9. *[They that be] slain with the sword are better than [they that be] slain with hunger*, etc.] Not that they are better with respect to their state after death, but with respect to their manner of dying. They that were slain by the sword of the Chaldeans, as many were, either upon the walls, or in sallies out against the enemy, these felt less pain, and had less terror of

mind in dying, than those did who perished by famine; they died a lingering death, as it were by inches, and were in continual pain of body and uneasiness of mind:

for these pine away, stricken through for [want of] the fruits of the field: that is, those that died by famine gradually wasted or “flowed” away, their fluid parts by degrees went off; and though they were not run through with the sword, they were stabbed by famine, and were so distressed in body and mind as if a sword had pierced them; not having the fruits of the field, the corn and the wine, to support nature, and keep them alive. Jarchi’s note is,

“they that were slain with hunger were inflated at the smell of the fruits of the field, when the enemies were roasting their flesh upon the grass without the wall; the smell entered into those that swelled by famine, and their bellies burst, and their excrements flowed out; and this is the death worse than that of being slain with the sword.”

And to this agrees the Targum,

“more happy are they that are slain with the sword than they that are slain with famine; for they that are slain with the sword flowed when their bellies were burst, by that which they ate of the fruits of the field; and those that were inflated with famine, their bellies burst through “want” of food.”

Most interpreters refer this clause to those that died of famine: but Gussetius^{f120} interprets it of those that were killed with the sword; and renders and paraphrases the words thus, “for they being stabbed, sent out”; by the open wounds, “a flux, [which arose] from the fruits of the field”; their food and nourishment being yet in their belly and veins, and so did not pine away through penury and famine; and their misery was short and light, in comparison of others: and so Abendana.

Ver. 10. *The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children,* etc.] Such as were naturally, and agreeably to their sex, pitiful and compassionate; merciful to the poor, as the Targum; and especially tenderhearted to their own offspring; yet, by reason of the soreness of the famine, became so cruel and hardhearted, as to take their own children, and slay them with their own hands, cut them to pieces, put them into a pot of water, and make a fire and boil them, and then eat them, as follows:

they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people: at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This strange and unnatural action was foretold by Moses, (⁽⁻¹⁸⁸⁶⁾Deuteronomy 28:56,57); and though we have no particular instance of it on record, as done at the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, yet no doubt there was, as may be concluded from the words: and at the siege of it by the Romans, when many things here spoken of had a fuller accomplishment, we have a remarkable instance of it, which Josephus ^{f121} relates; an illustrious woman, named Mary, pressed with the famine, slew her own son, a sucking child, boiled him, and ate part of him, and laid up the rest; which was found by the seditious party that broke into her house, which struck them with the utmost horror; (see Gill on “⁽⁻²¹²¹⁾Lamentations 2:20”).

Ver. 11. *The Lord hath accomplished his fury,* etc.] Which rose up in his mind, and which he purposed in himself to bring upon the sinful people of the Jews:

he hath poured out his fierce anger; the vials of his wrath in great abundance, even all he meant to pour out upon them:

and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof: not in the strong hold of Zion only, but in the whole city of Jerusalem, which was set on fire by the Chaldeans, as instruments, according to the will of God; and which not only consumed the houses of it, but even the foundations of them; so that it looked as if there was no hope of its ever being rebuilt. Aben Ezra interprets this fire of the famine.

Ver. 12. *The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world,* etc.] Not only the neighbouring nations, and the kings of them, but even such in all parts of the world that knew anything of Jerusalem:

would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem; when it was besieging, they did not believe it would be taken; and when they heard it was, it was incredible to them; it being so strongly fortified by art and nature, with mountains and hills, with walls and bulwarks, and had such a vast number of people in it; and, especially, was the city of the great God, who had so often and so signally preserved and saved it: the “adversary” and “enemy” are the same, and design the Chaldeans. The Targum distinguishes them, and makes Nebuchadnezzar the ungodly to be the adversary; and Nebuzaradan the enemy, who entered to slay the people of the house of Israel, in the gates

of Jerusalem; this was a marvellous thing to the nations round about. Titus, when he took this city, acknowledged it was owing to God ^{f122};

“God (says he) favouring us, we fought; God is he that has drawn the Jews out of these fortresses; for human hands and machines could have done nothing against these towers.”

Ver. 13. *For the sins of her prophets, [and] the iniquities of her priests,* etc.] Aben Ezra interprets this of the prophets of Baal, and the priests of the high places; but though false prophets and wicked priests are meant, yet such as were among the Jews, made choice of and approved of by them: (see ~~4834~~ 2 Chronicles 36:14); not that the people were faultless, but these were the principals, who by their examples led on and encouraged the common people in sin:

that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her; not the blood of innocent children, sacrificed to them by Moloch; but of good men in general, whom they persecuted and slew; and of the true prophets of the Lord in particular, whose blood they shed; and was the sin that brought on the destruction of their city by the Romans, as well as of that by the Chaldeans; (see ~~4835~~ Matthew 23:35-38 ~~5886~~ James 5:6).

Ver. 14. *They have wandered [as] blind [men] in the streets,* etc.] That is, the false prophets and wicked priests; and may be understood either literally, that when the city was taken, and they fled, they were like blind men, and knew not which way to go to make their escape, but wandered from place to place, and could find no way out; or spiritually, though they pretended to great light and knowledge, yet were as blind men, surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and error, and were blind leaders of the blind:

they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments; or, “could not but touch it with their garments” ^{f123}; or, “might not” ^{f124}; it was not lawful for them to do it: the sense is either, that, which way soever these men took to make their escape, they found so many dead carcasses in the streets, and such a profusion of blood by them, that they could not but touch it with their garments; or being besmeared with it, were so defiled, that others might not touch them, even their garments; or these men had defiled themselves with the shedding of the blood of righteous persons; so that they were odious to men, and they

shunned them as they would do anything that by the law rendered them in a ceremonious sense unclean, and therefore said as follows:

Ver. 15. *They cried unto them, depart ye, [it is] unclean*, etc.] Or, O ye “unclean”^{f125}; that is, the people said so to the priests, being polluted with blood; they abhorred them, did not care they should come nigh them, but bid them keep at distance; they that cleansed others of leprosy were treated as leprous persons themselves, and proclaimed unclean, and shunned as such: and, to show their vehement abhorrence of them, repeated the words,

depart, depart, touch not: that is, touch us not; they who had used to say; to others, stand by yourselves, we are more holy than you, being the Lord’s priests and prophets, are treated after the same manner themselves:

when they fled away, and wandered; fled from the city, and wandered among the nations; or when they were swiftly carried away captives, and became vagabonds in other countries:

they said among the Heathens, they shall no more sojourn [there]; being among the Heathens, they took notice of them as very wicked men, and said concerning them, now they are carried out of their own land, they shall never return there any more, and dwell in Jerusalem, and officiate in the temple, as they had formerly done.

Ver. 16. *The anger of the Lord hath divided them*, etc.] Or, “the face of the Lord”^{f126}; the anger that appeared in his face, in the dispensation of his providence, removed them out of their own land, and dispersed them among several countries and nations of the world, and as they now are: these are not the words of the Heathens continued, but of the prophet:

he will no more regard them; or, “he will not add to look on them”^{f127}, with a look of love, but continue his anger and resentment:

they respect not the persons of the priests, they favour not the elders; which is to be considered either as the sin of the false prophets and priests before described, which was the cause of their punishment; that they east great contempt on the true prophets of the Lord, as Jeremiah and others, and showed no regard to the elders of the people, or those godly magistrates; who would have corrected and restrained them: or else this is said of the nations among whom they were dispersed, as the Targum; who would pay no respect to their characters as priests, or show any pity to them on account of their age.

Ver. 17. *As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help*, etc.] Or, “while we were yet” ^{f128}; a nation, a people, a body politic, in our own land, before the city of Jerusalem was taken, we were looking for help, as was promised us; but it proved a vain help, none was given us; for which we kept looking to the last, till our eyes failed, and we could look no longer; no help appeared, nor was there any prospect or probability of it, and therefore gave all up:

in our watching we watched for a nation [that] could not save [us]; not the Romans, as the Targum, but the Egyptians; these promised them help and relief, and therefore in their watching they watched, or vehemently watched, and wistfully looked out for it, but all in vain; for though these made an attempt to help them, they durst not proceed; were obliged to retire, not being a match for the Chaldean army, and so could not save them, or break up the siege, and relieve them.

Ver. 18. *They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets*, etc.] The Chaldeans, from their forts and batteries, as they could see, they watched the people as they came out of their houses, and walked about the streets, and shot their arrows at them; so that they were obliged to keep within doors, and not stir out, which they could not do without great danger:

our end is near, for our days are fulfilled; for our end is come; either the end of their lives, the days, months, and years appointed for them being fulfilled; or the end of their commonwealth, the end of their civil and church state, at least as they thought; the time appointed for their destruction was not only near at hand, but was actually come; it was all over with them.

Ver. 19. *Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heavens*, etc.] That fly in the heavens; and which, as they have a quick sight to discern their prey afar off, are very swift to pursue it; they are the swiftest of birds, and are so to a proverb. Apuleius ^{f129} represents the swift pursuit of their prey, and sudden falling upon it, to be like thunder and lightning. Cicero ^{f130} relates of a certain racer, that came to an interpreter of dreams, and told him, that in his dream he seemed to become an eagle; upon which, says the interpreter, thou wilt be the conqueror; for no bird flies with such force and swiftness as that. And this bird is also remarkable for its constancy in flying: it is never weary, but keeps on flying to places the most remote. The poets have a fiction, that Jupiter, being desirous of knowing which was the middle of the world, sent out two eagles of equal swiftness, the one from

the east, and the other from the west, at the same moment; which stopped not till they came to Delphos, where they met, which showed that to be the spot; in memory of which, two golden eagles were placed in the temple there ^{f131}. The swiftness and constancy of these creatures in flying are here intended to set forth the speed and assiduity of the enemies of the Jews, in their pursuit after them; who followed them closely, and never ceased till they had overtaken them. The Chaldeans are designed, who pursued the Jews very hotly and eagerly, such as fled when the city was broken up; though not so much they themselves, as being thus swift of foot, as their horses on which they rode; (see ^{<2413>}Jeremiah 4:13).

they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness: or “plain” ^{f132}; there was no safety in either; such as fled to the mountains were pursued and overtaken there; and such who attempted to make their escape through the valleys were intercepted there: the reference is to the flight of Zedekiah, his nobles, and his army with him, who were pursued by the Chaldeans, and taken in the plains of Jericho, (^{<2517>}Jeremiah 52:7-9); hence it follows:

Ver. 20. *The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits,* etc.] Or “the Messiah”, or “the Christ of the Lord” ^{f133}; not Josiah, as the Targum; and so Jarchi and others; for though he was the Lord’s anointed, and the life of the people, being the head of them, as every king is, especially a good one; yet he was slain, and not taken, and much less in their pits, and that not by the Chaldeans, but by the Egyptians; nor did the kingdom cease with him, or the end of the Jewish state then come, which continued some years after: but rather Zedekiah, as Aben Ezra and others, the last of the kings of Judah, with whom all agrees; he was the Lord’s anointed as king, and the preserver of the lives and liberties of the people, at least as they hoped; but when the city was taken by the Chaldeans, and he fled for his life, they pursued him, and took him; he fell into their hands, their pits, snares, and nets, as was foretold he should; and which are sometimes called the net and snare of the Lord; (see ^{<2623>}Ezekiel 12:13 17:20); (see Gill on “^{<2749>}Lamentations 4:19”). Many of the ancient Christian writers apply this to Christ; and particularly Theodoret takes it to be a direct prophecy of him and his sufferings. Vatablus, who interprets it of Josiah, makes him to be a type of Christ; as Calvin does Zedekiah, of whom he expounds the words; and the Targum, in the king of Spain’s Bible, is,

“the King Messiah, who was beloved by us, as the breath of the spirit of life, which is in our nostrils.”

What is here said may be applied to Christ; he is the life of men, he gives them life and breath, and in him they live and move; their spiritual life is from him, and is maintained and preserved by him; he lives in his people, and they in him, and they cannot live without him, no more than a man without his breath: he is the Christ of God, anointed with the Holy Ghost to the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and from whom Christians have their holy unction and their name: he was taken, not by the Chaldeans, but by the wicked Jews; who looked upon him as a very mischievous person, as if he had been an evil beast, a beast of prey, though the pure spotless Lamb of God; and they dug pits, laid snares, and formed schemes to take him, and at last did, and with wicked hands crucified him, and slew him; though not without his own and his Father’s will and knowledge, (~~4023~~ Acts 2:23);

of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen; in the midst of the nations round about them, unmolested by them, none daring to meddle with them; at least safe from being carried captive, as now they were. Though Jeconiah was taken and carried into Babylon, yet Zedekiah being placed upon the throne, the Jews hoped to live peaceable and quiet lives under his government, undisturbed by their neighbours; the wise and good government of a prince, and protection under it, being sometimes compared in Scripture to the shadow of a rock or tree, (~~2312~~ Isaiah 32:2 ~~2510~~ Ezekiel 31:6 ~~27012~~ Daniel 4:12); but now it was all over with them; their hope was gone, he being taken. Something like this may be observed in the disciples of Christ; they hoped he would have restored the kingdom to Israel, and they should have lived gloriously under his government; they trusted that it was he that should have redeemed Israel; but, when he was taken and crucified, their hope was in a manner gone, (~~2821~~ Luke 24:21). True believers in Christ do live peaceably, comfortably, and safely under him; they are among the Heathen, among the men of the world, liable to their reproaches, insults, and injuries; Christ is a tree, to which he is often compared, one and another, that casts a delightful, reviving, refreshing, and fructifying shadow, under which they sit with great delight, pleasure, and profit, (~~2913~~ Song of Solomon 2:3 ~~2847~~ Hosea 14:7); he is a rock, the shadow of which affords rest to weary souls, and shelters from the heat of divine wrath, the fiery law of God, and darts of Satan, and persecutions of men, (~~2312~~ Isaiah 32:2 25:4,5); and under his

government, protection, and power, they dwell safely, that sin cannot destroy them, nor Satan devour them, nor the world hurt them; here they live spiritually, and shall never die eternally, (~~2435~~Jeremiah 23:5,6 ~~4900~~Psalms 91:1).

Ver. 21. *Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom*, etc.] The land of Idumea, and the inhabitants of it, who did indeed rejoice at the destruction of Jerusalem, (Obidiah 1:12); and here, in an ironic manner, are bid to go on with their mirth, if they could, like the young man in (~~21109~~Ecclesiastes 11:9), as Aben Ezra observes; for it would not last long, their note would soon be changed:

that dwellest in the land of Uz; not the country of Job, which had its name from Uz the son of Nahor, (~~8000~~Job 1:1 ~~00221~~Genesis 22:21); but a country in Idumea, from whence the whole was so called, and that from Uz the son of Dishan, one of the sons of Seir: or else the sense is, that Edom or Idumea, and the inhabitants of it, dwelt upon the borders of Uz; and so agrees very well with the place of Job's residence, which was near the land of Edom. The Targum, according to R. Elias^{f134}, is,

“rejoice, O wicked Rome;”

but, in the king of Spain's Bible, it is,

“rejoice and be glad, O Constantine (that is, Constantinople), the city of wicked Edom, which art built in the land of Armenia;”

and Jarchi says that Jeremiah prophesies concerning the destruction of the second temple, which the Romans destroyed; but in other copies, and according to Lyra, his words are, Jeremiah here prophesies concerning the destruction of the Roman empire, because that destroyed the temple; and it is usual with him, and other Rabbins, to interpret Edom of Rome;

the cup also shall pass through unto thee; the cup of God's wrath and vengeance; which, as it had come to the Jews, and was passing from one nation to another, in its turn would come to these Edomites; (see ~~24515~~Jeremiah 25:15,21);

thou shalt be drunken, and shall make thyself naked; be overcome by it; as persons with wine, or any strong drink, reel to and fro, and fall; and be utterly destroyed, lie helpless and without strength: “and be made naked”^{f135}, as it may be rendered; stripped of their riches and wealth; or they

should strip themselves of their clothes, and behave indecently, and expose those parts which ought to be covered, as drunken persons the sense is, they should be exposed, or expose themselves, to shame and contempt. The Septuagint version is, “and thou shalt be drunken, and pour out”^{f136}; that is, vomit, as drunken men do; and so Jarchi and Abendana interpret the word of vomiting; and the Targum is,

“and thou shalt be emptied.”

Ver. 22. *The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion*, etc.] In part in the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon, and more fully in their present captivity; for, as has been observed, there are some things in the preceding account, which had a further accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the distress of the Jews by the Romans. The Targum is,

“and after thine iniquity is fulfilled, O congregation of Zion, and thou shalt be delivered by the hands of the Messiah, and of Elias the high priest;”

he will no more carry thee away into captivity; he, the enemy; or the Lord, as the Targum: that is, thou shall no more be carried captive: this seems to confirm the above observation, that this chapter is a prophecy of what would be, as well as a narrative of what had been; and includes the destruction both of the first and second temple, and of the Jews both by the Chaldeans and Romans; for it is certain, that, after their deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, they have been carried captive, and are now in captivity;

he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; punish the Edomites for their sins, as is elsewhere threatened, (²⁴⁰⁰Jeremiah 49:7-22 ³⁵⁵²Ezekiel 25:12) (³⁰⁰⁰Amos 1:11); which was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument; and may have some respect to the destruction of the Romans, when the Jews shall be converted, and return to their own land. The Targum, in the king of Spain’s Bible, is,

“and at that time I will visit thine iniquity, O wicked Rome, which art built in Italy, and full of multitudes of the children of Edom; and the Persians shall come and oppress thee, and make thee desolate;”

and so the copy used by Munster:

he will discover thy sins; by the punishment of them; as, when God pardons sins, he is said to cover them; so, when he punishes for them, he discovers them; (see ~~2490~~ Jeremiah 49:10).

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 5

In this chapter are reckoned up the various calamities and distresses of the Jews in Babylon, which the Lord is desired to remember and consider, (~~2181~~ Lamentations 5:1-16); their great concern for the desolation of the temple in particular is expressed, (~~2187~~ Lamentations 5:17,18); and the chapter is concluded with a prayer that God would show favour to them, and turn them to him, and renew their prosperity as of old, though he had rejected them, and been wroth with them, (~~2189~~ Lamentations 5:19-22).

Ver. 1. *Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us*, etc.] This chapter is called, in some Greek copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, “the prayer of Jeremiah”. Cocceius interprets the whole of the state of the Christian church after the last destruction of Jerusalem; and of what happened to the disciples of Christ in the first times of the Gospel; and of what Christians have endured under antichrist down to the present times: but it is best to understand it of the Jews in Babylon; representing their sorrowful case, as represented by the prophet; entreating that the Lord would remember the affliction they were under, and deliver them out of it, that which he had determined should come upon them. So the Targum,

“remember, O Lord, what was decreed should be unto us;”

and what he had long threatened should come upon them; and which they had reason to fear would come, though they put away the evil day far from them; but now it was come, and it lay heavy upon them; and therefore they desire it might be taken off:

consider, and behold our reproach: cast upon them by their enemies; and the rather the Lord is entreated to look upon and consider that, since his name was concerned in it, and it was for his sake, and because of the true religion they professed; also the disgrace they were in, being carried into a foreign country for their sins; and so were in contempt by all the nations around.

Ver. 2. *Our inheritance is turned to strangers*, etc.] The land of Canaan in general, which was given to Abraham and his seed to be their inheritance; and their field, and vineyards in particular, which came to them by inheritance from their fathers, were now in the hands of the Chaldeans, strangers to God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, as all Gentiles were, (^{אחרי}Ephesians 2:12);

our houses to aliens; which they had built or purchased, or their fathers had left them, were now inhabited by those of another country.

Ver. 3. *We are orphans and fatherless*, etc.] In every sense; in a natural sense, their fathers having been cut off by the sword, famine, or pestilence; in a civil sense, their king being taken from them; and in a religious sense, God having forsaken them for their sins:

our mothers [are] as widows; either really so, their husbands being dead; or were as if they had no husbands, they not being able to provide for them, protect and deferred them. The Targum adds,

“whose husbands are gone to the cities of the sea, and it is doubtful whether they are alive.”

Some understand this politically, of their cities being desolate and defenceless.

Ver. 4. *We have drunken our water for money*, etc.] They who in their own land, which was a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, had wells of water of their own, and water freely and in abundance, now were obliged to pay for it, for drink, and other uses:

our wood is sold unto us; or, “comes to us by a price”^{f137}; and a dear one; in their own land they could have wood out of the forest, for cutting down and bringing home; but now they were forced to give a large price for it.

Ver. 5. *Our necks [are] under persecution*, etc.] A yoke of hard servitude and bondage was put upon their necks, as Jarchi interprets it; which they were forced to submit unto: or, “upon our necks we are pursued”^{f138}; or, “suffer persecution”: which Aben Ezra explains thus, in connection with the (^{אחרי}Lamentations 5:4); if we carry water or wood upon our necks, the enemy pursues us; that is, to take it away from us. The Targum relates a fable here, that when Nebuchadnezzar saw the ungodly rulers of the children of Israel, who went empty, he ordered to sow up the books of the

law, and make bags or wallets of them, and fill them with the stones on the banks of the Euphrates, and loaded them on their necks:

we labour, [and] have no rest; night nor day, nor even on sabbath days; obliged to work continually till they were weary; and, when they were, were not allowed time to rest themselves, like their forefathers in Egypt.

Ver. 6. *We have given our hand [to] the Egyptians*, etc.] Either by way of supplication, to beg bread of them; or by way of covenant and agreement; or to testify subjection to them, in order to be supplied with food: many of the Jews went into Egypt upon the taking of the city, (^{<2485>}Jeremiah 43:5-7);

[and to] the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread; among whom many of the captives were dispersed; since from hence they are said to be returned, as well as from Egypt, (^{<28116>}Isaiah 11:16).

Ver. 7. *Our fathers have sinned, [and are] not*, etc.] In the world, as the Targum adds; they were in being, but not on earth; they were departed from hence, and gone into another world; and so were free from the miseries and calamities their children were attended with, and therefore more happy:

and we have borne their iniquities; the punishment of them, or chastisement for them: this is not said by way of complaint, much less as charging God with injustice, in punishing them for their fathers' sins, or to excuse theirs; for they were ready to own that they had consented to them, and were guilty of the same; but to obtain mercy and pity at the hands of God.

Ver. 8. *Servants have ruled over us*, etc.] The Targum is,

“the sons of Ham, who were given to be servants to the sons of Shem, they have ruled over us;”

referring to the prophecy of Noah, (^{<00025>}Genesis 9:26,27); or such as had been tributary to the Jews, as the Edomites; so Aben Ezra; the Babylon, an, are meant; and not the nobles and principal inhabitants only, but even their servants, had power and authority over the Jews and they were at their beck and command; which made their servitude the more disagreeable and intolerable:

[there is] none that doth deliver [us] out of their hand; out of the hand of these servants.

Ver. 9. *We gat our bread [with the peril of] our lives*, etc.] This seems to refer to the time of the siege when they privately went out of the city to get in some provision, but went in danger of their lives:

because of the sword of the wilderness: or, “of the plain”^{f139}; because of the, word of the Chaldean army, which lay in the plain about Jerusalem into whose hand there was danger of falling, and of being cut to pieces.

Ver. 10. *Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine.*] Or “terrors [and horrors of] famine”; which are very dreadful and distressing: or, “the storms of famine”; (see ^{<9106>}Psalm 11:6 119:53); or, “burning winds”^{f140}; such as are frequent in Africa and Asia; to which the famine is compared that was in Jerusalem, at the siege of it, both by the Chaldeans and Romans; and as an oven, furnace, or chimney becomes black by the smoke of the fire burnt in it, or under it; so the skins of the Jews became black through these burning winds and storms, or burnings of famine; (see ^{<2008>}Lamentations 4:8). So Jarchi says the word has the signification of “burning”; for famine as it were burns up the bodies of men when most vehement.

Ver. 11. *They ravished the women in Zion*, etc.] Or “humbled” them^{f141}; an euphemism; the women that were married to men in Zion, as the Targum; and if this wickedness was committed in the holy mountain of Zion, it was still more abominable and afflicting, and to be complained of; and if by the servants before mentioned, as Aben Ezra interprets it, it is another aggravating circumstance of it; for this was done not in Babylon when captives there; but at the taking of the city of Jerusalem, and by the common soldiers, as is too often practised:

[and] the maids in the cities of Judah; in all parts of the country, where the Chaldean army ravaged, there they ravished the maids. The Targum is,

“the women that were married to men in Zion were humbled by strangers; (the Targum in the king of Spain’s Bible is, by the Romans;) and virgins in the cities of Judah by the Chaldeans;”

suggesting that this account has reference to both destructions of the city, and the concomitants and consequences thereof.

Ver. 12. *Princes are hanged up by their hand*, etc.] According to some, as Aben Ezra observes, by the hand of the servants before mentioned; however, by the hand of the Chaldeans or Babylonians; (see ^{<2520>}Jeremiah

52:10). Some understand it of their own hands, as if they laid violent hands upon themselves, not being able to bear the hardships and disgrace they were subjected to but I should rather think this is to be understood of hanging them, not by the neck, but by the hand, could any instance be given of such a kind of punishment so early used, and by this people; which has been in other nations, and in more modern times:

the faces of elders were not honoured; no reverence or respect were shown to elders in age or office, or on account of either; but were treated with rudeness and contempt.

Ver. 13. *They took the young men to grind*, etc.] In the mill, which was laborious service; and which persons were sometimes put to, by way of punishment; and was the punishment of servants; (see ^{<0762>}Judges 16:21). Some render it, “the young men bore the grist”^{f142}; carried the corn, the meal ground, from place to place. The Targum is,

“the young men carried the millstones;”

and so Jarchi, they put millstones upon their shoulders, and burdens so as to weary them. Ben Melech, from their Rabbins, relates, that there were no millstones in Babylon; wherefore the Chaldeans put them upon the young men of Israel, to carry them thither. The Vulgate Latin version is,

“they abused the young men in an unchaste manner;”

suggesting something obscene intended by grinding; (see ^{<0810>}Job 31:10); but the context will not admit of such a sense:

and the children fell under the wood; such loads of wood were laid upon them, that they could not bear them, but fell under them. Aben Ezra understands it of moving the wood of the mill, of turning the wooden handle of it; or the wooden post, the rider or runner, by which the upper millstone was turned: this their strength was not equal to, and so failed. The Targum interprets it of a wooden gibbet, or gallows; some wooden engine seems to be had in view, used as a punishment, which was put upon their necks, something like a pillory; which they were not able to stand up under, but fell.

Ver. 14. *The elders have ceased from the gate*, etc.] Of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, as the Targum; from the gate of the city, where they used to sit and try causes; but now there was nothing of this kind done:

the young men from their music; vocal and instrumental; the latter is more particularly specified, though both may be intended; neither were any more heard; their harps were hung upon the willows on the banks of Euphrates, which ran through the city of Babylon, (~~137:1~~ Psalm 137:1,2).

Ver. 15. *The joy of our heart is ceased*, etc.] ward joy was gone, as well as the external signs of it: it “sabbatized” ^{f143}, as it may be rendered; alluding perhaps to the cordial joy expressed formerly on their sabbaths and other festivals, now not observed; at least, not with that joy, inward and outward, they formerly were:

our dance is turned into mourning; which also was used at their solemn feasts, as well as at their common diversions, (~~1721~~ Judges 21:21); but now no more of that; but, instead of it, mourning at the calamities they were oppressed with; and at the remembrance of mercies and privileges, civil and religious, they were deprived of.

Ver. 16. *The crown is fallen [from] our head*, etc.] Or, “the crown of our head is fallen” ^{f144}; all their honour and glory as a nation were gone; the glory of their kingdom and priesthood, to both which a crown or mitre belonged; the glory of church and state. Aben Ezra interprets it of the temple, the place of the divine Majesty. Sanctius thinks there is an allusion to the crowns they wore upon their heads at their feasts and festivals; and so the words have a close connection with what goes before:

woe unto us that we have sinned! which had brought all these evils upon them: this is not to be considered as an imprecation or denunciation of misery; but as a commiseration of their case; calling upon others to it, and particularly God himself, to have mercy upon them; for, alas for them! they had sinned, and justly deserved what was come upon them; and therefore throw themselves at the feet of mercy, and implore divine compassion.

Ver. 17. *For this our heart is faint*, etc.] Our spirits sink; we are ready to swoon and die away; either for this, that we have sinned; because of our sins, they are so many, so great, and so aggravated; or for those distresses and calamities they have brought upon us before mentioned; or for the desolation of Zion, more especially, after expressed; and so the Targum,

“for this house of the sanctuary, which is desolate, our heart is weak:”

for these [things] our eyes are dim; or “darkened”^{f145} almost blinded with weeping; can scarcely see out of them; or as persons in a swoon; for dimness of sight usually attends faintness of spirit.

Ver. 18. *Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate*, etc.]

Meaning either the city of Jerusalem in general, or the temple in particular, which both lay in ruins: but the latter gave the truly godly the greatest concern; that the seat of divine Majesty should be in such a condition; that the public exercises of religion should cease, and there be no more opportunities of waiting upon God, and worshipping him as heretofore; their civil interest, and the loss of that did not so much affect them as the interest of religion, and what that suffered:

the foxes walk upon it: as they do in desolate places, shunning the company of men; but here they walked in common, and as freely as in the woods and deserts: this was fulfilled in the destruction of the second temple, as well as the first. R. Akiba^{f146} and his companions were walking together; they saw a fox come out of the holy of holies; they wept, but he laughed or rejoiced; they wept, that in the place where the stranger that drew near should die, now foxes walked upon it; he laughed or rejoiced, because, as this prophecy was fulfilled, so would others that predicted good things.

Ver. 19. *Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever*, etc.] The same in his nature and perfections; in his grace and goodness; in his power and faithfulness; in his purposes and promises; though all things else change, are fickle and inconstant, he changes not, but abides the same, without any variableness or shallow of turning; whatever revolutions there are in the world, or alterations in the course of Providence, yet he remains firm and unalterable in his counsel and covenant; though all material things are subject to decay, and even his own sanctuary lay in ruins, yet he himself continued just as he ever was. The eternity and unchangeableness of God are of great use and comfort to his people in times of distress, and to be regarded and observed:

thy throne from generation to generation; though his throne on earth, in Jerusalem, in the temple, was thrown down, yet his throne in heaven remained unshaken; there he sits, and reigns, and rules, and overrules all things here below to his own glory and the good of his people; and this is the saints’ comfort in the worst of times, that Zion’s King reigns; he has reigned, and will reign, throughout all generations. The Targum is,

“the house of thine habitation in the high heavens; the throne of thy glory to the generations of generations?”

Ver. 20. *Wherefore dost thou, forget us for ever*, etc.] Since thou art firm, constant, and unchangeable, and thy love and covenant the same. God seems to forget his people when he afflicts them, or suffers them to be oppressed, and does not arise immediately for their help; which being deferred some time, looks like an eternity to them, or they fear it will ever be so; at least this they say to express their eager desire after his gracious presence, and to show how much they prize it:

[and] forsake us so long time? or, “to length of days”^{f147}? so long as the seventy years’ captivity; which to be forsaken of God, or to seem to be forsaken of him, was with them a long time.

Ver. 21. *Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned*, etc.] This prayer expresses the sense they had of their backslidings from God, and distance from him; of their inability to turn themselves to the Lord, or convert themselves; and of their need of divine grace, and of the efficacy of that to effect it; (see ^{<2418>}Jeremiah 31:18); for this is to be understood not only of returning them to their own land, and to the external worship of God in it; but of turning them to the Lord by true and perfect repentance, as the Targum; of the conversion of their hearts and the reformation of their lives:

renew our days as of old; for good, as the Targum adds. The request is, that their good days might be renewed; that they might enjoy the same peace and prosperity, and all good things in their own land, as they had done in days and years past: first they pray for repentance; then restoration.

Ver. 22. *But thou hast utterly rejected us*, etc.] That looks as if they had no hope, and were in despair of having their petitions granted; since God had entirely rejected them from being his people, and would never more have mercy on them; but the words may be rendered, “though thou hast in rejecting rejected us”^{f148}, or else, “unless thou hast utterly rejected us”^{f149}; or rather by an interrogation, “for wilt thou utterly reject”, or “despise us?”^{f150} surely thou wilt not; such is thy grace and goodness:

thou art very wroth against us; thou hast been, and still continuest to be: or, “wilt thou be exceeding wroth against us?”^{f151} or continue thy wrath to extremity, and for ever? thou wait not; it is not consistent with, thy mercy and grace, truth and faithfulness; and so it is an argument of faith in prayer,

and not an expression of despondency; though the Jews, because they would not have the book end in what is sorrowful and distressing, repeat the foregoing verse; and the like method they take at the end of Ecclesiastes, and the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi, as Jarchi observes.

FOOTNOTES

ft1 -- Connexion, par. 1. p. 332.

ft2 -- Contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 8.

ft3 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 174. No. 224.

ft4 -- Vid. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 1.

ft5 -- Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1.

ft6 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.

ft7 -- ddb “sola”, V. L. Montanus.

ft8 -- E Talmud Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 104. 1. & Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

ft9 -- hkb t hkb “plorando plorat”, Vatablus; “plorando plorabit”, Pagninus, Montanus.

ft10 -- T. Sanhedr. ib. col. 2.

ft11 -- yn[m “per afflictionem”; j “hic, non [prae], sed per significat”, Grotius; “[vel] prae afflictione, [sub.] a Chaldaeis perpessa”; so some in Vatablus.

ft12 -- twgwn “moestae”, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; “moerent”, Piscator; “moestitia affectae sunt”, Cocceius.

ft13 -- çarl “in caput”, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “facti sunt caput”, Cocceius.

ft14 -- “Quod jejunia sabbatariorum”. Martial. l. 4. Epigr. 4.

ft15 -- “----Cui septima quaeque fuit lux Ignava, et partem vitae non attigit ullam”. Juvenal. Satyr. 5.

ft16 -- hytbçm l [wqj ç “irrident cessationes ejus”, Junius & Tremellius; “rident propter cessationes”, Piscator.

ft17 -- haj j aj j “peccatum peccavit”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

ft18 -- hdylnl “in commotionem”, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin.

- ft19 -- “Ut separata”, Grotius; “tanquam ex immunditia separata est”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft20 -- **μyāl p** “mirabiliter”, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft21 -- E Talmud. Bab. Yebamot, fol 16. 2.
- ft22 -- **çpn byçhl** “ad reducendum animam”, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft23 -- **l k μkyl a awl** “O vos omnes”, V. L.
- ft24 -- **hndryw** “et desaeiit in ea”, Munster, Tigurine version; “et contrivit ipsum”; so some in Vatablus.
- ft25 -- “Et dominatus est ea”, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator.
- ft26 -- **wgrtçy** “involutae”, Vatablus; “perplexae”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; “contortae”, Piscator, Grotius, Michaelis.
- ft27 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1.
- ft28 -- **yçpn byçm** “reducens animam meam”, V. L. Montanus; “qui restituat”, Tigurine version.
- ft29 -- **μymmwc** “perditi”, V. L.
- ft30 -- **hydyb wyx hçrp** “frangit Sion manibus suis”, sub. “panem”, Vatablus.
- ft31 -- **hwby awb qydx** “justus ipse est Jehovah”, Cocceius.
- ft32 -- **whyp** “ori ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft33 -- <Arabic> “esurivit et fame ac inedia laboravit”, Golius, col. 556.
- ft34 -- **μçpn ta wbyçyw** “et reducerent animam suam”, Montanus.
- ft35 -- <Arabic> “fermentavit, commiscuit, alteravit, turbavique [mentem]”, Castel. col. 1294.
- ft36 -- **twmk tybb** “in domo mors ipsa”, Munster; “plane mors”; Junius & Tremellius.
- ft37 -- **tyç[hta yk** “laetati sunt; sed tu fecisti”, Grotius.
- ft38 -- “Utinam induceres diem”, so some in Vatablus.
- ft39 -- **μwy tabj** “adduxisti diem”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; “induxisti [aut] inducis”, Vatablus.

ft40 -- wml l l w[επιφυλλισον αυτοις, Sept. “vindemia”, V. L.
Vatablus.

ft41 -- by[y “obnubilavit”, Montanus, Vatablus; “obnubilat”, Cocceius.

ft42 -- Prospect of the Temple, c. 17. p. 1089.

ft43 -- rbç l [“propter contritionem”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius &
Tremellius; “propter confractionem”, Piscator; “propter fractionem”,
Cocceius.

ft44 -- Ænw[l [wl g al w “et non revelarunt [legmen] pravitati tuae
impositum”, Christ. Ben. Miehaelis.

ft45 -- μyj wdmw και εξωσματα, Sept. “et expulsionones”, Montanus,
Vatablus, Calvin; “et ad depulsionem spectantium”, Junius &
Tremellius; “depulsionones, expulsionones”, Stockius, p. 649.

ft46 -- wxp “dilatant”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ft47 -- Vol. 1. p. 129.

ft48 -- Scripture Chronology, p. 685.

ft49 -- E Talmud Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 2.

ft50 -- μdt l a “non taceat”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; “ne sileat”,
Calvin, Michaelis.

ft51 -- μyj pj yl l [“parvulos qui educantur”, Pagninus; “parvulos
educationum”, Montanus; “educationis”, Calvin; “infantes
palmationum, [sive] tractationis palmarum”, Michaelis; “pueros palmis
tractatos”, Cocceius.

ft52 -- E Talmud Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

ft53 -- hal tw “et fatigatione”, Montanus, Vatablus, Castalio.

ft54 -- μl w[ytmk ως νεκρους αιωνος, Sept. “quasi mortuos seculi”,
Montanus, Calvin.

ft55 -- ytçj n χαλκον μου Sept. “aes meum, [vel] chalybem meum”,
Piscator.

ft56 -- hw[ytbytn “semitas meas pervertit”, Pagninus, Montanus,
Vatablus, Calvin; “contorsit”, Michealis.

- ft57 -- **wtpça ynb** “filios pharetrae suae”, Montanus, Munster, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft58 -- L. 1. Ode 22.
- ft59 -- **μtnygn a ḡgn** “pulsare istrumentum musicum”.
- ft60 -- **pyrwrmb** “amaritudinibus”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis, “amaroribus”, Cocceius.
- ft61 -- “Pane lapidoso”, Seneca Deuteronomy Beneficiis, l. 7.
- ft62 -- Lexic. Polyglott, col. 1791.
- ft63 -- Concordant. Ebr. Part. p. 168. No. 763.
- ft64 -- **hbwj** “bonorum”, V. L. “boni”, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft65 -- **yj xn** “duratio mea”, Montanus; “perennitas mea”, Cocceius.
- ft66 -- **rkz** “recordare”, Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michealis.
- ft67 -- **rwkzt rwkz** “recordando recordaberis”, Luther, Michaelis.
- ft68 -- **yçpn yl [j yçtw** “meditatur apud me anima mea”, Junius & Tremellius; “et animo meo meditor”, Castalio.
- ft69 -- **wnmt al yk hwby ydsj** “quod misericordiae Jehovae deficiunt”, vel “defecerunt”, so some in Vatablus; “studia Jehovae quod non defecerunt”, Cocceius.
- ft70 -- **wmj r** “miserationes ejus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft71 -- **Ætnwma** “fides tua”, V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “fides quae est de te”, Pagninus.
- ft72 -- **μmwdw l yj yw** “et expectet et silens”, Pagninus, Montanus; “qui et expectat et silet”, Piscator.
- ft73 -- “Bonus ergo et expectabit et silens erit”, Schmidt.
- ft74 -- **ddb bçy** “ut sedeat solus”, Gataker.
- ft75 -- **wyl [l j n** “projecit super ipsum”, Tigurine version; “sub. Dominus”, Vatablus; “quod imposuerit ipsi Deus”, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

- ft76 -- hwqt cy yl wa “forte est expectatio”, Junius & Tremellius; “fortassis”, Piscator, Cocceius; “forte est spes”, Michaelis.
- ft77 -- wbl m “ex corde suo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin.
- ft78 -- ^wyl [ynp dgn “coram facie superioris”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft79 -- har al “non vidit, vel videt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin.
- ft80 -- “Non videret?” Piscator.
- ft81 -- So some in Gataker.
- ft82 -- ^nwaty γογγυσεῖ Sept. “quiritaretur”, Junius & Tremellius; “taedio se confecit”, Calvin; “fremet”, Strigelius; “murmurabit”, Cocceius.
- ft83 -- waj j l [rbg “unusquisque propter sua peccata [quiritur]”, Piscator; “vel contra sua peccata fremat”, Strigelius.
- ft84 -- tj pw dj p “pavor et fovea”, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft85 -- twgph ^yam “a non intermissionibus”, Montanus, Calvin; “sine intervallis”, Cocceius.
- ft86 -- “Eo quod nullae sunt intermissiones”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version.
- ft87 -- yry[twnb l km “supra cunctas filias civitatis meae”; so some in Vatablus; and Jarchi.
- ft88 -- yyj rwbb wtmx “concluserunt in fovea vitam meam”, Noldius, Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 141, “manciparunt fovea vitam meam”, Cocceius.
- ft89 -- twytj t rwbm “e cisterna infimitatum”, Piscator.
- ft90 -- ytj wrl “ad anhelitum meum”, Cocceius; “ad respirationem meam”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft91 -- μl [t l a “non avertisti”, Grotius.
- ft92 -- yçpn ybyr “causas animae meae”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft93 -- yttw[“perversitatem”, Pagninus, Montanus; “quae exercetur, vel exercebatur in me”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

- ft94 -- **μnwygh** “meditationem istorum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “loquellam eorum”, Michaelis.
- ft95 -- Animadv. Philol. p. 436. <Arabic> “maledixit verborum contumelia insectatus fuit, peculiariter carmine seu satyra, et subsannavit, vituperavit”, Golius, col. 2515.
- ft96 -- **μtnygnm** “musicus”, Gataker.
- ft97 -- **bl tngm υπερασπισμον καρδιας**, “tegumentum cordis”, Montanus, Vatablus; “obtegumentum cordis”, Stockius, p. 199. so Ben Melech; “scutum cordis”, V. L. “clypeum cordis”, Munster.
- ft98 -- **μ[wy** “rubigine obducetur”, Montanus; “obtectum [vel] absconditum”, Vatablus. So Ben Melech.
- ft99 -- Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.
- ft100 -- Hierozoic. l. 1. c. 7. p. 46.
- ft101 -- Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 20.
- ft102 -- Ib. l. 6. c. 12.
- ft103 -- Ibid.
- ft104 -- Hist. de Animal. l. 10. c. 8.
- ft105 -- Ib. l. 5. c. 4.
- ft106 -- Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 8.
- ft107 -- **^hyrwg** “catulos suos”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft108 -- Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 13.
- ft109 -- **rzkal** “in crudelem”, Montanus; “sub. mutata fuit”, Piscator; “similis est crudeli”, Munster.
- ft110 -- **[lwt yl [** “super coccinum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “super coccino”, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft111 -- **taj j m---** **^w[l dgyw** “et ingens fuit iniquitas--prae peccato”, Montanus; “et major extitit pravitas--prae peccato”, Cocceius. So V. L.
- ft112 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 6. p. 688.

- ft113 -- **μυνννpm μx[wmda** “lucidiores corpore margaritis”, Bochart; “candidi fuerunt [in] corpore prae margaritis”, Noldius.
- ft114 -- <Arabic> “[camelis tributum], candidus perquam albus”, Giggeius; <Arabic> “candidi coloris”, Dorcas, Giggeius apud Golium, col. 49, 51.
- ft115 -- Comment. in Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. No. 107.
- ft116 -- **μtrzg ryps** “sapphirus excisio eorum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; “[quasi] sectio eorum esset ex sapphiro”, Munster.
- ft117 -- Deuteronomy Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 7. p. 676.
- ft118 -- So Bootius, Animadv. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 8. p. 144. Lutherus & Osiander in ib.
- ft119 -- **rwj çm Æçj** “obscurior ipsa nigredine”, Tigurine version; “magis quam nigredo vel carbo”, Vatablus; “prae caligines”, Calvin; “ex nigredine”, Piscator.
- ft120 -- Comment. Ebr. p. 225.
- ft121 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4.
- ft122 -- Joseph. Deuteronomy Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft123 -- **μhyçwbl b w[gy wl kwy al b** “quem non possunt, quin tangent vestimentis suis”, “Junius & Tremellius.
- ft124 -- “Tangebant eum (nempe sanguinem) vestibus eorum quem non potuerunt”, i.e. “jure”, Gataker.
- ft125 -- **amj** “immunde”, Montanus; “immundi”, Strigelius. “gens polluta”, Vatablus; “discedite polluti”, Gataker.
- ft126 -- **hwby ynp** “facies Domini”, V. L. Montanus, Piscator.
- ft127 -- **μj ybhl Pyswy** “non addet aspicere eos”, Montanus.
- ft128 -- **hnydw[** “quum adhuc essemus”, Munster: Piscator.
- ft129 -- Florida, l. 2.
- ft130 -- Deuteronomy Divinatione, l. 2. p. 2001.
- ft131 -- Vid. Strabo Geograph. l. 9. p. 289. & Pindar. Pythia, Ode 4. l. 7, 8. & Schmidt in ib. p. 174, 175.

ft132 -- rbdmb “in plano”, Gataker.

ft133 -- hwhy j yçm χριστος κυριος, Sept. “Christus Dominus”, V. L.
“Christus Domini”, Pagninus.

ft134 -- In Tishbi, p. 227.

ft135 -- yr [ttw “nudaberis”, V. L.

ft136 -- και αποχεεις, Sept. “et eris vomens”, Pagninus, Vatablus.

ft137 -- waby ryj mb “in pretio venerunt”, Pagninus, Montanus; “caro nobis pretio veniunt”, Michaelis.

ft138 -- wnpdrrn wnrawx l [“super colla nostra persecutionem passisumus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; “vel patimur”, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ft139 -- rbdmh brj ynpm “propter gladium [in] deserto, [sive] plano”, Gataker.

ft140 -- b[r twp[l z “horrorum famis”, Montanus; “terrores, [vel] tremores”, Vatablus; “procellas famis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “exustiones”, Pagninus, Calvin; “adustiones famis”, Stockius, p. 281.

ft141 -- wn[εταπεινωσαν, Sept. “humiliaverunt”, V. L. Munster.

ft142 -- waçn ʾwj j pyrwj b “juvenes farinam portaverunt”; so some in Gataker; “juvenes molam tulerunt”, Cocceius; “juvenes ad molendum portant”, Junius & Tremellius.

ft143 -- tbç “sabbatizat”.

ft144 -- wnçar trj [hl pn “cecidit corona capitis nostri”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ft145 -- wkçj “contenebrati sunt”, V. L. “obtenebrati”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Cocceius.

ft146 -- T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. 2.

ft147 -- pmyy Æral “in longitudinem dierum”, Pagninus, Montanus.

ft148 -- wntsam sam pa yk “quamvis detestatione detestatus es nos”, Targ.

ft149 -- “Nisi forte repudiando repudiasti nos”, Calvin.

ft150 -- “Nam an omnino sperneres nos?” Junius & Tremellius.

ft151 -- damēl wɳyl [tpxq “effervesceres contra nos admodum?”
Junius & Tremellius.