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ISAIAH 22: 1 The burden of the valley of vision. What ails you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops?

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Prophecy concerning Jerusalem, Isa 22:1-14. Sentence against Shebna, who was over the household, Isa 22:15-19. Prophecy concerning Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah, Isa 22:20, Isa 22:21. From Eliakim, Isaiah, (agreeably to the mode universally adopted in the prophetic writings, of making the things then present, or which were shortly to be accomplished, types or representations of things to be fulfilled upon a larger scale in distant futurity), makes a transition to the Messiah, of whom Eliakim was a type, to whom the words will best apply, and to whom some passages in the prophecy must be solely restrained, Isa 22:20-24. The sentence against Shebna again confirmed, Isa 22:25.

This prophecy, ending with the fourteenth verse of this chapter, is entitled, "The oracle concerning the valley of vision," by which is meant Jerusalem, because, says Sal. ben Melech, it was the place of prophecy. Jerusalem, according to Josephus, was built upon two opposite hills Sion and Acra, separated by a valley in the midst. He speaks of another broad valley between Acra and Moriah, Bell. Jud. 5:13; 6:6. It was the seat of Divine revelation; the place where chiefly prophetic vision was given, and where God manifested himself visibly in the holy place. The prophecy foretells the invasion of Jerusalem by the Assyrians under Sennacherib; or by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. Vitringa is of opinion that the prophet has both in view: that of the Chaldeans in the first part, Isa 22:1-5, which he thinks relates to the flight of Zedekiah, 2Kgs 25:4, 2Kgs 25:5; and that of the Assyrians in the latter part, which agrees with the circumstances of that time, and particularly describes the preparations made by Hezekiah for the defense of the city, Isa 22:8-11. Compare 2Chr 32:2-5. - L.

#### Verse 1

Art - gone up to the house-tops "Are gone up to the house-tops" - The houses in the east were in ancient times, as they are still, generally, built in one and the same uniform manner. The roof or top of the house is always flat, covered with broad stones, or a strong plaster of terrace, and guarded on every side with a low parapet wall; see Deu 22:8. The terrace is frequented as much as any part of the house. On this, as the season favors, they walk, they eat, they sleep, they transact business, (1Sam 9:25, see also the Septuagint in that place), they perform their devotions Act 10:9. The house is built with a court within, into which chiefly the windows open: those that open to the street are so obstructed with lattice-work that no one either without or within can see through them. Whenever, therefore, any thing is to be seen or heard in the streets, any public spectacle, any alarm of a public nature, every one immediately goes up to the house-top to satisfy his curiosity. In the same manner, when any one has occasion to make any thing public, the readiest and most effectual way of doing it is to proclaim it from the house-tops to the people in the streets. "What ye hear in the ear, that publish ye on the house-top," saith our Savior, Mat 10:27. The people running all to the tops of their houses gives a lively image of a sudden general alarm. Sir John Chardin's MS. note on this place is as follows: "Dans les festes pour voir passer quelque chose, et dans les maladies pour les annoncer aux voisins en allumant des lumieres, le peuple monte sur les terrasses." "In festivals, in order to see what is going forward, and in times of sickness, in order to indicate them to neighbors by lighting of candles, the people go up to the house-tops."

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ISAIAH 22: 2 You that are full of shouting, a tumultuous city, a joyous town; your slain are not slain with the sword, neither are they dead in battle.

ISAIAH 22: 3 All your rulers fled away together. They were bound by the archers. All who were found by you were bound together. They fled far away.

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Verse 3

All thy rulers - are bound by the archers "All thy leaders - are fled from the bow" - There seems to be somewhat of an inconsistency in the sense according to the present reading. If the leaders were bound, אסרו usseru, how could they flee away? for their being bound, according to the obvious construction and course of the sentence, is a circumstance prior to their flight. I therefore follow Houbigant, who reads הסרו huseru, remoti sunt, "they are gone off." גלו galu, transmigraverunt, Chaldee; which seems to confirm this emendation.

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ISAIAH 22: 4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me. I will weep bitterly. Don't labour to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

ISAIAH 22: 5 For it is a day of confusion, and of treading down, and of perplexity, from the Lord, the LORD of Armies, in the valley of vision; a breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the mountains."

ISAIAH 22: 6 Elam carried his quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen; and Kir uncovered the shield.

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Verse 6

Chariots of men "The Syriac" - It is not easy to say what רכב אדם recheb adam, a chariot of men, can mean. It seems by the form of the sentence, which consists of three members, the first and the third mentioning a particular people, that the second should do so likewise. Thus ברכב ארם ופרשים berecheb aram uparashim, "with chariots the Syrian, and with horsemen:" the similitude of the letters ד dalet and ר resh is so great, and the mistakes arising from it are so frequent, that I readily adopt the correction of Houbigant, ארם aram, Syria, instead of אדם adam, man; which seems to me extremely probable. The conjunction ו vau, and, prefixed to פרשים parashim, horsemen, seems necessary in whatever way the sentence may be taken; and it is confirmed by five MSS., (one ancient), four of De Rossi's, and two ancient of my own; one by correction of Dr. Kennicott's, and three editions. Kir was a city belonging to the Medes. The Medes were subject to the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time, (see 2Kgs 16:9, and 2Kgs 17:6); and so perhaps might Elam (the Persians) likewise be, or auxiliaries to them.

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ISAIAH 22: 7 Your choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.

ISAIAH 22: 8 He took away the covering of Judah; and you looked in that day to the armour in the house of the forest.

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## Verse 8

The armor "The arsenal" - Built by Solomon within the city, and called the house of the forest of Lebanon; probably from the great quantity of cedar from Lebanon which was employed in the building. See 1Kgs 7:2, 1Kgs 7:3.

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ISAIAH 22: 9 You saw the breaches of the city of David, that they were many; and you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

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## Verse 9

Ye gathered together the waters "And ye shall collect the waters" - There were two pools in or near Jerusalem, supplied by springs: the upper pool, or the old pool, supplied by the spring called Gihon, 2Chr 32:30, towards the higher part of the city, near Sion, or the city of David, and the lower pool, probably supplied by Siloam, towards the lower part. When Hezekiah was threatened with a siege by Sennacherib, he stopped up all the waters of the fountains without the city; and brought them into the city by a conduit, or subterranean passage cut through the rock; those of the old pool, to the place where he had a double wall, so that the pool was between the two walls. This he did in order to distress the enemy, and to supply the city during the siege. This was so great a work that not only the historians have made particular mention of it, 2Kgs 20:20; 2Chr 32:2, 2Chr 32:3, 2Chr 32:5, 2Chr 32:30; but the son of Sirach also has celebrated it in his encomium on Hezekiah. "Hezekiah fortified his city, and brought in water into the midst thereof: he digged the hard rock with iron, and made wells for water," Ecclesiasticus 48.

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ISAIAH 22: 10 You numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall.

ISAIAH 22: 11 You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you didn't look to him who had done this, neither did you have respect for him who purposed it long ago.

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## Verse 11

Unto the maker thereof "To him that hath disposed this" - That is, to God the Author and Disposer of this visitation, the invasion with which he now threatens you. The very same expressions are applied to God, and upon the same occasion, Isa 37:26 : - "Hast thou not heard of old, that I have disposed it;

And of ancient times, that I have formed it?"

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ISAIAH 22: 12 In that day, the Lord, the LORD of Armies, called to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to dressing in sackcloth:

ISAIAH 22: 13 and behold, joy and gladness, killing cattle and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die."

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 Verse 13

Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die - This has been the language of all those who have sought their portion in this life, since the foundation of the world. So the poet: -

Heu, heu nos miserif quam totus homuncio nil est!

Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet orcus.

Ergo vivamus, dum licet esse, bene.

Alas alas! what miserable creatures are we, only the semblances of men! And so shall we be all when we come to die. Therefore let us live joyfully while we may.

Domitian had an image of death hung up in his dining-room, to show his guests that as life was uncertain, they should make the best of it by indulging themselves. On this Martial, to flatter the emperor, whom he styles god, wrote the following epigram: -

Frangere thoros, pete vina, tingere nardo.

Ipsa jubet mortis te meminisse Deus.

Sit down to table - drink heartily - anoint thyself with spikenard; for God himself commands thee to remember death.

So the adage: -

Ede, bibe, lude post mortem nulla voluptas. "Eat, drink, and play, while here ye may:

No revelry after your dying day."

St. Paul quotes the same heathen sentiment, 1Cor 15:32 : "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Anacreon is full in point, and from him nothing better can be expected: - Ως ουν ετ' ευδι' εστιν, και πινε και κυβευε και σπενδε τω λυαιω· Μη νουσοσ, ην τις ελθη, λεγη, σε μη δει πινειν.

Anac. Od. xv., 50:11. "While no tempest blots your sky,

Drink, and throw the sportful dye:

But to Bacchus drench the ground,

Ere you push the goblet round;

Lest some fatal illness cry, 'Drink no more the cup of joy.'"

Addison.

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ISAIAH 22: 14 The LORD of Armies revealed himself in my ears, "Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you until you die," says the Lord, the LORD of Armies.

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## Verse 14

It was revealed in mine ears "The voice of Jehovah" - The Vulgate has vox Domini; as if in his copy he had read יהוה קול kol Yehovah; and in truth, without the word קול kol, voice, it is not easy to make out the sense of the passage; as appears from the strange versions which the rest of the ancients, (except the Chaldee), and many of the moderns, have given of it; as if the matter were revealed in or to the ears of Jehovah: εν τοςωσω Κυριου, in the ears of the Lord, Septuagint. Vitranga translates it, Revelatus est in auribus meis Jehovah, "Jehovah hath revealed it in mine ears," and refers to 1Sam 2:27; 1Sam 3:21 : but the construction in those places is different, and there is no speech of God added; which here seems to want something more than the verb נגלה nigleh to introduce it. Compare Isa 5:9, where the text is still more imperfect.

The Lord God of hosts - יהוה צבאות Adonai Yehovah tsebaoth. But אדני Adonai, Lord, is omitted by two of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and by two of my own; by three editions, and the Septuagint, Syriac and Arabic.

ISAIAH 22: 15 Thus says the Lord, the LORD of Armies, "Go, get yourself to this treasurer, even to Shebna, who is over the house, and say,

#### Verse 15

Go - unto Shebna - The following prophecy concerning Shebna seems to have very little relation to the foregoing, except that it might have been delivered about the same time; and Shebna might be a principal person among those whose luxury and profaneness is severely reprehended by the prophet in the conclusion of that prophecy, Isa 22:11-14.

Shebna the scribe, mentioned in the history of Hezekiah, chap. 36, seems to have been a different person from this Shebna, the treasurer or steward of the household, to whom this prophecy relates. The Eliakim here mentioned was probably the person who, at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, was actually treasurer, the son of Hilkiyah. If so, this prophecy was delivered, as the preceding, (which makes the former part of the chapter), plainly was, some time before the invasion of Sennacherib. As to the rest, history affords us no information. "And say unto him" - Here are two words lost out of the text, which are supplied by two of Dr. Kennicott's MSS., one ancient, which read ואמרת אליו veamarta elai, and thou shalt say unto him; by the Septuagint, και ειπον αυτω, and in the same manner by all the ancient versions. It is to be observed that this passage is merely historical, and does not admit of that sort of ellipsis by which in the poetical parts a person is frequently introduced speaking, without the usual notice, that what follows was delivered by him.

ISAIAH 22: 16 'What are you doing here? Who has you here, that you have dug out a tomb here?' Cutting himself out a tomb on high, chiselling a habitation for himself in the rock!"

#### Verse 16

A sepulcher on high - in a rock - It has been observed before, on Isaiah 14, that persons of high rank in Judea, and in most parts of the east, were generally buried in large sepulchral vaults, hewn out in the rock for the use of themselves and their families. The vanity of Shebna is set forth by his being so studious and careful to have his sepulcher on high - in a lofty vault; and that probably in a high

situation, that it might be more conspicuous. Hezekiah was buried, למעלה lemalah, εν αναβασει, Sept.: in the chiefest, says our translation; rather, in the highest part of the sepulchres of the sons of David, to do him the more honor, 2Chr 32:33. There are some monuments still remaining in Persia of great antiquity, called Naksi Rustam, which give one a clear idea of Shebna's pompous design for his sepulcher. They consist of several sepulchers, each of them hewn in a high rock near the top; the front of the rock to the valley below is adorned with carved work in relievo, being the outside of the sepulcher. Some of these sepulchers are about thirty feet in the perpendicular from the valley, which is itself perhaps raised above half as much by the accumulation of the earth since they were made. See the description of them in Chardin, Pietro della Valle, Thevenot, and Kempfer. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 17, mentions these ancient monuments, and calls them the sepulchres of the kings of Persia. - L.

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ISAIAH 22: 17 Behold, the LORD will overcome you and hurl you away violently. Yes, he will grasp you firmly.

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#### Verse 17

Cover thee - That is, thy face. This was the condition of mourners in general, and particularly of condemned persons. See Est 6:12; Est 7:8.

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ISAIAH 22: 18 He will surely wind you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a large country. There you will die, and there the chariots of your glory will be, you shame of your lord's house.

ISAIAH 22: 19 I will thrust you from your office. You will be pulled down from your station.

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#### Verse 19

I will drive thee - אהרסך ehersecha, in the first person, Syr. Vulg.

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ISAIAH 22: 20 It will happen in that day that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah,

ISAIAH 22: 21 and I will clothe him with your robe, and strengthen him with your belt. I will commit your government into his hand; and he will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

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#### Verse 21

To the inhabitants - ליושבי leyoshebey, in the plural number, four of Dr. Kennicott's MSS., (two ancient), and two of De Rossi's, with the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

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ISAIAH 22: 22 I will lay the key of the house of David on his shoulder. He will open, and no one will shut. He will shut, and no one will open.

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Verse 22

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder - As the robe and the baldric, mentioned in the preceding verse, were the ensigns of power and authority, so likewise was the key the mark of office, either sacred or civil. The priestess of Juno is said to be the key-bearer of the goddess, κλειδουχος Ἡρας· Aeschyl. Suppl. 299. A female high in office under a great queen has the same title: - Καλλιθοη κλειδουχος Ολυμπιαδος βασιλειης. "Callithoe was the key-bearer of the Olympian queen."

Auctor Phoronidis ap. Clem. Alex. p. 418, edit. Potter. This mark of office was likewise among the Greeks, as here in Isaiah, borne on the shoulder; the priestess of Ceres, κατωμαδιαν εχε κλαιδα, had the key on her shoulder. Callim. Ceres, verse 45. To comprehend how the key could be borne on the shoulder, it will be necessary to say something of the form of it: but without entering into a long disquisition, and a great deal of obscure learning, concerning the locks and keys of the ancients, it will be sufficient to observe, that one sort of keys, and that probably the most ancient, was of considerable magnitude, and as to the shape, very much bent and crooked. Aratus, to give his reader an idea of the form of the constellation Cassiopeia, compares it to a key. It must be owned that the passage is very obscure; but the learned Huetius has bestowed a great deal of pains in explaining it, Animadvers. in Manilii, lib. 1:355; and I think has succeeded very well in it. Homer Odys. Isa 21:6, describes the key of Ulysses' storehouse as ευκαμπης, of a large curvature; which Eustathius explains by saying it was δρεπανοειδης, in shape like a reaphook. Huetius says the constellation Cassiopeia answers to this description; the stars to the north making the curve part, that is, the principal part of the key; the southern stars, the handle. The curve part was introduced into the key-hole; and, being properly directed by the handle, took hold of the bolts within, and moved them from their places. We may easily collect from this account, that such a key would lie very well upon the shoulder; that it must be of some considerable size and weight, and could hardly be commodiously carried otherwise. Ulysses' key was of brass, and the handle of ivory: but this was a royal key. The more common ones were probably of wood. In Egypt they have no other than wooden locks and keys to this day; even the gates of Cairo have no better. Baumgarten, Peregr. 1:18. Thevenot, part ii., chap. 10. But was it not the representation of a key, either cut out in cloth and sewed on the shoulder of the garment, or embroidered on that part of the garment itself? The idea of a huge key of a gate, in any kind of metal, laid across the shoulder, is to me very ridiculous.

In allusion to the image of the key as the ensign of power, the unlimited extent of that power is expressed with great clearness as well as force by the sole and exclusive authority to open and shut. Our Savior, therefore, has upon a similar occasion made use of a like manner of expression, Mat 16:19; and in Rev 3:7 has applied to himself the very words of the prophet.

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ISAIAH 22: 23 I will fasten him like a nail in a sure place. He will be for a throne of glory to his father's house.

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Verse 23

A nail - In ancient times, and in the eastern countries, as the way of life, so the houses, were much more simple than ours at present. They had not that quantity and variety of furniture, nor those accommodations of all sorts, with which we abound. It was convenient and even necessary for them, and it made an essential part in the building of a house, to furnish the inside of the several apartments with sets of spikes, nails, or large pegs, upon which to dispose of and hang up the several movables and utensils in common use, and proper to the apartment. These spikes they worked into the walls at the first erection of them, the walls being of such materials that they could not bear their being driven in afterwards; and they were contrived so as to strengthen the walls by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience. Sir John Chardin's account of this matter is this: "They do not drive with a hammer the nails that are put into the eastern walls. The walls are too hard, being of brick; or, if they are of clay, too moldering: but they fix them in the brick-work as they are building. They are large nails, with square heads like dice, well made, the ends being bent so as to make them cramp-irons. They commonly place them at the windows and doors, in order to hang upon them, when they like, veils and curtains." Harmer's Observ. 1 p. 191. And we may add, that they were put in other places too, in order to hang up other things of various kinds; as appears from this place of Isaiah, and from Eze 15:3, who speaks of a pin or nail, "to hang any vessel thereon." The word used here for a nail of this sort is the same by which they express that instrument, the stake, or large pin of iron, with which they fastened down to the ground the cords of their tents. We see, therefore, that these nails were of necessary and common use, and of no small importance in all their apartments; conspicuous, and much exposed to observation: and if they seem to us mean and insignificant, it is because we are not acquainted with the thing itself, and have no name to express it but by what conveys to us a low and contemptible idea. "Grace hath been showed from the Lord our God," saith Ezra, Eze 9:8, "to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place:" that is, as the margin of our Bible explains it, "a constant and sure abode." "He that doth lodge near her (Wisdom's) house,

Shall also fasten a pin in her walls."

Ecclesiastes. 14:24.

The dignity and propriety of the metaphor appears from the Prophet Zechariah's use of it: - "From him shall be the corner-stone, from him the nail,

From him the battle-bow,

From him every ruler together." Zac 10:4.

And Mohammed, using the same word, calls Pharaoh the lord or master of the nails, that is, well attended by nobles and officers capable of administering his affairs. Koran, Sur. 38:11, and 89:9. So some understand this passage of the Koran. Mr. Sale seems to prefer another interpretation.

Taylor, in his Concordance, thinks יָתֵד yathed means the pillar or post that stands in the middle, and supports the tent, in which such pegs are fixed to hang their arms, etc., upon; referring to Shaw's Travels, p. 287. But יָתֵד yathed is never used, as far as appears to me, in that sense. It was indeed necessary that the pillar of the tent should have such pegs on it for that purpose; but the hanging of such things in this manner upon this pillar does not prove that יָתֵד yathed was the pillar itself.

A glorious throne "A glorious seat" - That is, his father's house and all his own family shall be gloriously seated, shall flourish in honor and prosperity; and shall depend upon him, and be supported by him.



ISAIAH 22: 24 They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the cups even to all the pitchers.

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Verse 24

All the glory - One considerable part of the magnificence of the eastern princes consisted in the great quantity of gold and silver vessels which they had for various uses. "Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in Solomon's days;" 1Kgs 10:21. "The vessels in the house of the forest of Lebanon," the armory of Jerusalem so called, "were two hundred targets, and three hundred shields of beaten gold." Ibid. 1Kgs 10:16, 1Kgs 10:17. These were ranged in order upon the walls of the armory, (see Sol 4:4), upon pins worked into the walls on purpose, as above mentioned. Eliakim is considered as a principal stake of this sort, immovably fastened in the wall for the support of all vessels destined for common or sacred uses; that is, as the principal support of the whole civil and ecclesiastical polity. And the consequence of his continued power will be the promotion and flourishing condition of his family and dependents, from the highest to the lowest.

Vessels of flagons "Meaner vessels" - נבליים nebalim seems to mean earthen vessels of common use, brittle, and of little value, (see Lam 4:2; Jer 48:12), in opposition to אגנות aganoth, goblets of gold and silver used in the sacrifices. Exo 24:6.

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ISAIAH 22: 25 "In that day," says the LORD of Armies, "the nail that was fastened in a sure place will give way. It will be cut down, and fall. The burden that was on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken it."

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Verse 25

The nail that is fastened - This must be understood of Shebna, as a repetition and confirmation of the sentence above denounced against him.

What is said of Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Isa 22:20-24, is very remarkable; and the literal meaning is not easy to be understood. From Isa 9:6, and from Rev 3:7, it seems to belong to our Lord alone. The removal of Shebna from being over the treasure of the Lord's house, Isa 22:19, and the investiture of Eliakim with his robe, girdle, office, and government, Isa 22:20, etc., probably point out the change of the Jewish priesthood, and the proclaiming of the unchangeable priesthood of Christ. See Psa 110:4. Eliakim signifies The resurrection of the Lord; or, My God, he shall arise. Hilkiah signifies The Lord my portion or lot. The key of David, shutting and opening, etc., may intend the way of salvation through Christ alone. For the hope of salvation and eternal life comes only through Eliakim, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is said, Isa 22:24, "They shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house" - for, in Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and the offspring and the issue, הַצֵּצְאִים hatstseetsaim from יצא yatsa, to go out, - the suckers from the root; the sideshoots, the apostles and primitive ministers of his word. The issue, הַצְּפִיעוֹת hatstsephioth, probably means the issue's issue; so the Targum. The grandchildren, all those who believe on the Lord Jesus through their word. "The nail that is fastened in the sure place shall be removed," Isa 22:25, Kimchi refers not to Eliakim, but to Shebna, Isa 22:17-19. By, "They shall hang upon him all vessels of small quantity and large quantity,"

has been understood the dependence of all souls, of all capacities, from the lowest in intellect to the most exalted on the Lord Jesus, as the only Savior of all lost human spirits.

As the literal interpretation of this prophecy has not been found out, we are justified from parallel texts to consider the whole as referring to Jesus Christ, and the government of the Church, and the redemption of the world by him. Nor are there many prophecies which relate to him more clearly than this, taken in the above sense.