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ISAIAH 58: 1 "Cry aloud, don't spare, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their disobedience, and to the house of Jacob their sins.

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This elegant chapter contains a severe reproof of the Jews on account of their vices, particularly their hypocrisy in practising and relying on outward ceremonies, such as fasting and bodily humiliation, without true repentance, Isa 58:1-5. It then lays down a clear and comprehensive summary of the duties they owed to their fellow creatures, Isa 58:6, Isa 58:7. Large promises of happiness and prosperity are likewise annexed to the performance of these duties in a variety of the most beautiful and striking images, Isa 58:8-12. Great temporal and spiritual blessedness of those who keep holy the Sabbath day, Isa 58:13, Isa 58:14.

#### Verse 1

Cry aloud, spare not - Never was a louder cry against the hypocrisy, nor a more cutting reproof of the wickedness, of a people professing a national established religion, having all the forms of godliness without a particle of its power. This chapter has been often appointed to be read on political fast days for the success of wars carried on for - God knows what purposes, and originating in - God knows what motives. Politically speaking, was ever any thing more injudicious?

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ISAIAH 58: 2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways: as a nation that did righteousness, and didn't forsake the ordinance of their God, they ask of me righteous judgements; they delight to draw near to God.

ISAIAH 58: 3 'Why have we fasted,' say they, 'and you don't see? Why have we afflicted our soul, and you take no knowledge?' "Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

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#### Verse 3

Have we adopted our soul "Have we afflicted our souls" - Twenty-seven MSS. (six ancient) of Dr. Kennicott's, thirty-six of De Rossi's, and two of my own, and the old edition of 1488 have the noun in the plural number, נַפְשֵׁינוּ naphsheynu, our souls; and so the Septuagint, Chaldee, and Vulgate. This reading is undoubtedly genuine.

In the day of your fast ye find pleasure - Fast days are generally called holidays, and holidays are days of idleness and pleasure. In numberless cases the fast is turned into a feast.

And exact all your labors - Some disregard the most sacred fast, and will oblige their servant to work all day long; others use fast days for the purpose of settling their accounts, posting up their books, and drawing out their bills to be ready to collect their debts. These are sneaking hypocrites; the others are daringly irreligious.

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ISAIAH 58: 4 Behold, you fast for strife and contention, and to strike with the fist of wickedness: you don't fast this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high.

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 Verse 4

Ye fast for strife and debate - How often is this the case! A whole nation are called to fast to implore God's blessing on wars carried on for the purposes of wrath and ambition.

To smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day "To smite with the fist the poor. Wherefore fast ye unto me in this manner" - I follow the version of the Septuagint, which gives a much better sense than the present reading of the Hebrew. Instead of רשע לא resha lo, they seem to have read in their copy רש על מה לי rash al mah li. The four first letters are the same, but otherwise divided in regard to the words; the four last are lost, and א aleph added in their place, in order to make some sort of sense with רשע ל. The version of the Septuagint is, και τυπτετε τυγμαῖς ταπεινον· ἵνα τι μοι νηστευετε - as above.

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ISAIAH 58: 5 Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

ISAIAH 58: 6 "Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to release the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"

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## Verse 6

Let the oppressed go free - How can any nation pretend to fast or worship God at all, or dare to profess that they believe in the existence of such a Being, while they carry on the slave trade, and traffic in the souls, blood, and bodies, of men! O ye most flagitious of knaves, and worst of hypocrites, cast off at once the mask of religion; and deepen not your endless perdition by professing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, while ye continue in this traffic!

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ISAIAH 58: 7 Isn't it to distribute your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor who are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you not hide yourself from your own flesh?

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## Verse 7

Deal thy bread to the hungry - But this thou canst not do, if thou eat it thyself. When a man fasts, suppose he do it through a religious motive, he should give the food of that day, from which he abstains, to the poor and hungry, who, in the course of providence, are called to sustain many involuntary fasts, besides suffering general privations. Wo to him who saves a day's victuals by his religious fast! He should either give them or their value in money to the poor. See Isa 58:6.

That thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house "To bring the wandering poor into thy house" - πτωχοῦς ἀστεργοῦς, Septuagint; egenos vagosque, Vulgate; and מטלטלין metaltelin, Chaldee. They read, instead of מרודים merudim, הנוודים hanudim. מר mer is upon a rasure in the Bodleian MS. The same MS. reads ביתה bayethah, in domum, "into the house." - L.

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ISAIAH 58: 8 Then your light shall break out as the morning, and your healing shall spring out speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the LORD's glory shall be your rear guard.

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Verse 8

And thine health shall spring forth speedily "And thy wounds shall speedily be healed over" - Et cicatrix vulneris tui cito obducetur "And the scar of thy wounds shall be speedily removed." Aquila's Version, as reported by Jerome, with which agrees that of the Chaldee.

The glory "And the glory" - Sixteen MSS. (five ancient) of Dr. Kennicott's, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate add the conjunction I vau, וכבוד vechabod.

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ISAIAH 58: 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away from your midst the yoke, the putting out of the finger, and speaking wickedly;

ISAIAH 58: 10 and if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then your light shall rise in darkness, and your obscurity be as the noonday;

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Verse 10

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry "If thou bring forth thy bread to the hungry" - "To draw out thy soul to the hungry," as our translators rightly enough express the present Hebrew text, is an obscure phrase, and without example in any other place. But instead of נפשך naphshecha, thy soul, eight MSS. (three ancient) of Kennicott's and three of De Rossi's read לחםך lachmecha, thy bread; and so the Syriac renders it. The Septuagint express both words, τον αρτον εκ της ψυχης σου, "thy bread from thy soul." I cannot help thinking, however, that this reading is a gloss, and should not be adopted. To draw out the soul in relieving the poor, is to do it, not of constraint or necessity, but cheerfully, and is both nervous and elegant. His soul pities and his hand gives.

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ISAIAH 58: 11 and the LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in dry places, and make strong your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters don't fail.

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Verse 11

And make fat thy bones "And he shall renew thy strength" - Chaldaeus forte legit עצמתך yachaliph otsmathecha; confer cap. Isa 40:29, Isa 40:31, et Isa 41:1. - Secker. "The Chaldee perhaps read יחליף עצמתך yachaliph otsmathecha. "The Chaldee has וגופך יחיי בחיי עלמא veguphach vechaiyey bechaiyey alma, "and he will vivify thy body in life eternal." The rest of the ancients seem not to know what to make of יחליץ yachalits; and the rendering of the Vulgate, which seems to be the only proper one, ossa tua liberabit, "he will deliver thy bones," makes no sense. I follow this excellent emendation; to favor which it is still farther to be observed that three MSS., instead of יחליץ atsmotheycha, have עצמתך otsmathecha, singular. - L.

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ISAIAH 58: 12 Those who shall be of you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

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Verse 12

The restorer of paths to dwell in "The restorer of paths to be frequented by inhabitants" - To this purpose it is rendered by the Syriac, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

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ISAIAH 58: 13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the LORD honourable; and shall honour it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words:

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Verse 13

If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath - The meaning of this seems to be, that they should be careful not to take their pleasure on the Sabbath day, by paying visits, and taking country jaunts; not going, as Kimchi interprets it, more than a Sabbath day's journey, which was only two thousand cubits beyond the city's suburbs. How vilely is this rule transgressed by the inhabitants of this land! They seem to think that the Sabbath was made only for their recreation!

From doing thy pleasure - The Septuagint, Syriac, and Chaldee, for עשות asoth, manifestly express מעשות measoth. So likewise a MS. has it, but with the omission of the words שבת רגלך shabbath raglecha. - L.

The holy of the Lord "And the holy feast of Jehovah" - Twenty-eight MSS. (seven ancient) add the conjunction ו vau, ולקדוש velikedosh; and so the Syriac, Chaldee, and Vulgate. One of my own has the same reading.

Nor speaking thine own words "From speaking vain words" - It is necessary to add some epithet to make out the sense; the Septuagint say, angry words; the Chaldee, words of violence. If any such epithet is lost here, the safest way is to supply it by the prophet's own expression, Isa 58:9, ודבר און vedabar aven, vain words; that is, profane, impious, injurious, etc. "The additional epithet seems unnecessary; the Vulgate and Syriac have it not; and the sense is good without it; two ways, first by taking ודבר vedabar for a noun, and דבר dabur for the participle pahul, and rendering, - 'From pursuing thy pleasure, and the thing resolved on.'

Or, secondly, by supposing the force of the preposition מ mem to have been continued from the verb ממצוא mimmetso to the verb ודבר vedabber immediately following; and rendering, - 'From executing thy pleasure, and from speaking words concerning it.'

But the first seems the easier rendering."

Dr. Jubb.

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ISAIAH 58: 14 then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will make you to ride on the high places of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father:" for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.

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Verse 14

Then shalt thou delight thyself - If all fasts and religious observances be carried on in the spirit and manner recommended above, God's blessing will attend every ordinance. But in public fasts, prescribed not in the Book of God, but by the rulers of nations in general (very unfit persons) care should be taken that the cause is good, and that God's blessing may be safely implored in it.

France has lately fasted and prayed that they might be able to subjugate Spain, restore and establish the horrible inquisition, and utterly destroy all the liberties of the people! Is this such a fast as God hath chosen? - a.d. 1823.