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ISAIAH 66: 1 Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what kind of house will you build to me? and what place shall be my rest?"

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This chapter treats of the same subject with the foregoing. God, by his prophet, tells the Jews, who valued themselves much on their temple and pompous worship, that the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; and that no outward rites of worship, while the worshippers are idolatrous and impure, can please him who looketh at the heart, Isa 66:1-3. This leads to a threatening of vengeance for their guilt, alluding to their making void the law of God by their abominable traditions, their rejection of Christ, persecution of his followers, and consequent destruction by the Romans. But as the Jewish ritual and people shadow forth the system of Christianity and its professors; so, in the prophetic writings, the idolatries of the Jews are frequently put for the idolatries afterwards practiced by those bearing the Christian name. Consequently, if we would have the plenitude of meaning in this section of prophecy, which the very content requires, we must look through the type into the antitype, viz., the very gross idolatries practiced by the members of Antichrist, the pompous heap of human intentions and traditions with which they have encumbered the Christian system, their most dreadful persecution of Christ's spiritual and true worshippers, and the awful judgments which shall overtake them in the great and terrible day of the Lord, Isa 66:4-6. The mighty and sudden increase of the Church of Jesus Christ at the period of Antichrist's fall represented by the very strong figure of Sion being delivered of a man-child before the time of her travail, the meaning of which symbol the prophet immediately subjoins in a series of interrogations for the sake of greater force and emphasis, Isa 66:7-9. Wonderful prosperity and unspeakable blessedness of the world when the posterity of Jacob, with the fullness of the Gentiles, shall be assembled to Messiah's standard, Isa 66:10-14. All the wicked of the earth shall be gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the slain of Jehovah shall be many, Isa 66:15-18. Manner of the future restoration of the Israelites from their several dispersions throughout the habitable globe, Isa 66:19-21. Perpetuity of this new economy of grace to the house of Israel, Isa 66:22. Righteousness shall be universally diffused in the earth; and the memory of those who have transgressed against the Lord shall be had in continual abhorrence, Isa 66:23, Isa 66:24. Thus this great prophet, after tracing the principal events of time, seems at length to have terminated his views in eternity, where all revolutions cease, where the blessedness of the righteous shall be unchangeable as the new heavens, and the misery of the wicked as the fire that shall not be quenched.

This chapter is a continuation of the subject of the foregoing. The Jews valued themselves much upon their temple, and the pompous system of services performed in it, which they supposed were to be of perpetual duration; and they assumed great confidence and merit to themselves for their strict observance of all the externals of their religion. And at the very time when the judgments denounced in Isa 65:6 and Isa 65:12 of the preceding chapter were hanging over their heads, they were rebuilding, by Herod's munificence, the temple in a most magnificent manner. God admonishes them, that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" and that a mere external worship, how diligently soever attended, when accompanied with wicked and idolatrous practices in the worshippers, would never be accepted by him. This their hypocrisy is set forth in strong colors, which brings the prophet again to the subject of the former chapter; and he pursues it in a different manner, with more express declaration of the new economy, and of the flourishing state of the Church under it. The increase of the Church is to be sudden and astonishing. They that escape of the Jews, that is, that become converts to the Christian faith, are to be employed in the

Divine mission to the Gentiles, and are to act as priests in presenting the Gentiles as an offering to God; see Rom 15:16. And both, now collected into one body, shall be witnesses of the final perdition of the obstinate and irreclaimable.

These two chapters manifestly relate to the calling of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Christian dispensation, and the reprobation of the apostate Jews, and their destruction executed by the Romans. - L.

ISAIAH 66: 2 For all these things has my hand made, and so all these things came to be," says the LORD: "but to this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word.

#### Verse 2

And all those things have been "And all these things are mine" - A word absolutely necessary to the sense is here lost out of the text: 'ל li, mine. It is preserved by the Septuagint and Syriac.

ISAIAH 66: 3 He who kills an ox is as he who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, as he who breaks a dog's neck; he who offers an offering, as he who offers pig's blood; he who burns frankincense, as he who blesses an idol. Yes, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations:

#### Verse 3

He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man "He that slayeth an ox killeth a man" - These are instances of wickedness joined with hypocrisy; of the most flagitious crimes committed by those who at the same time affected great strictness in the performance of all the external services of religion. God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, upbraids the Jews with the same practices: "When they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it," Eze 23:39. Of the same kind was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in our Savior's time: "who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretense made long prayers," Mat 23:14.

The generality of interpreters, by departing from the literal rendering of the text, have totally lost the true sense of it, and have substituted in its place what makes no good sense at all; for it is not easy to show how, in any circumstances, sacrifice and murder, the presenting of legal offerings and idolatrous worship, can possibly be of the same account in the sight of God.

He that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood "That maketh an oblation offereth swine's blood" - A word here likewise, necessary to complete the sense, is perhaps irrecoverably lost out of the text. The Vulgate and Chaldee add the word offereth, to make out the sense; not, as I imagine, from any different reading, (for the word wanted seems to have been lost before the time of the oldest of them as the Septuagint had it not in their copy,; but from mere necessity.

Le Clerc thinks that מעלה maaleh is to be repeated from the beginning of this member; but that is not the case in the parallel members, which have another and a different verb in the second place, "דם dam, sic Versiones; putarem tamen legendum participium aliquod, et quidem זבח zabach, cum

sequatur n cheth, nisi jam praecesserat." - Secker. Houbigant supplies אכל achal, eateth. After all, I think the most probable word is that which the Chaldee and Vulgate seem to have designed to represent; that is, מקריב makrib, offereth.

In their abominations - ובשקוציהם ubeshikkutseyhem, "and in their abominations;" two copies of the Machazor, and one of Kennicott's MSS. have ובגלוליהם ubegilluleyhem, "and in their idols." So the Vulgate and Syriac.

ISAIAH 66: 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears on them; because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they didn't listen; but they did that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I didn't delight."

ISAIAH 66: 5 Hear the LORD's word, you who tremble at his word: "Your brothers who hate you, who cast you out for my name's sake, have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy;' but it is those who shall be disappointed.

#### Verse 5

Your brethren that hated you - said "Say ye to your brethren that hate you" - The Syriac reads אמרו לאחיכם imru laacheychem; and so the Septuagint, Edit. Comp. ειπατε αδελφοις υμων· and MS. Marchal. has αδελφοις· and so Cyril and Procopius read and explain it. It is not easy to make sense of the reading of the Septuagint in the other editions; ειπατε αδελφοι ημων τοις μισουσιν υμας· but for ημων, our, MS. 1. D. 2 also has υμων, your.

ISAIAH 66: 6 A voice of tumult from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that renders recompense to his enemies.

#### Verse 6

A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord - It is very remarkable that similar words were spoken by Jesus, son of Ananias, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. See his very affecting history related by Josephus, War, B. vi., chap. v.

ISAIAH 66: 7 "Before she travailed, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a son.

ISAIAH 66: 8 Who has heard such a thing? who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she gave birth to her children.

#### Verse 8

Who hath seen "And who hath seen" - Twenty MSS., (four ancient), of Kennicott's, and twenty-nine of De Rossi's, and two ancient of my own, and the two oldest editions, with two others, have ומי umi, adding the conjunction I vau; and so read all the ancient versions. And who hath seen?

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ISAIAH 66: 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to be delivered?" says the LORD: "shall I who cause to give birth shut the womb?" says your God.

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Verse 9

Shall I bring to the birth - האני אשביר haani ashbir, num ego matricem frangam; Montanus. The word means that which immediately precedes the appearance of the fetus - the breaking forth of the liquor amnii. This also is an expression that should be studiously avoided in prayers and sermons.

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ISAIAH 66: 10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her: rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn over her;

ISAIAH 66: 11 that you may nurse and be satisfied at the comforting breasts; that you may drink deeply, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."

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Verse 11

With the abundance of her glory "From her abundant stores" - For מזיז mizziz, from the splendor, two MSS. and the old edition of 1488, have מזיז mizziv; and the latter ז zain is upon a rasure in three other MSS. It is remarkable that Kimchi and Sal. ben Melec, not being able to make any thing of the word as it stands in the text, say it means the same with מזיז mizziv; that is, in effect, they admit of a various reading, or an error in the text. But as Vitranga observes, what sense is there in sucking nourishment from the splendor of her glory? He therefore endeavors to deduce another sense of the word זיז ziz; but, as far as it appears to me, without any authority. I am more inclined to accede to the opinion of those learned rabbins, and to think that there is some mistake in the word; for that in truth is their opinion, though they disguise it by saying that the corrupted word means the very same with that which they believe to be genuine. So in Isa 41:24 they say that אפה apha, a viper, means the same with אפה ephes, nothing; instead of acknowledging that one is written by mistake instead of the other. I would propose to read in this place מזיז mizzin or מזיז mizzen, which is the reading of one of De Rossi's MS., (instead of מזיז meziz), from the stores, from זון zun, to nourish, to feed; see Gen 45:23; 2Chr 11:23; Psa 144:13. And this perhaps may be meant by Aquila, who renders the word by απο παντοδαπιας with which that of the Vulgate, ab omnimoda gloria, and of Symmachus and Theodotion, nearly agree. The Chaldee follows a different reading, without improving the sense; מיינ meyin, from the wine. - L.

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ISAIAH 66: 12 For thus says the LORD, "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: and you will nurse. You will be carried on her side, and will be dandled on her knees.

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Verse 12

Like a river, and - like a flowing stream "Like the great river, and like the overflowing stream" - That is, the Euphrates, (it ought to have been pointed כנהר cannahar, ut fluvius ille, as the river), and the Nile.

Then shall ye suck "And ye shall suck at the breast" - These two words שד על al shad, at the breast, seem to have been omitted in the present text, from their likeness to the two words following; על צד al tsad, at the side. A very probable conjecture of Houbigant. The Chaldee and Vulgate have omitted the two latter words instead of the two former. See note on Isa 60:4 (note).

ISAIAH 66: 13 As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted in Jerusalem."

ISAIAH 66: 14 You will see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants; and he will have indignation against his enemies.

ISAIAH 66: 15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind; to render his anger with fierceness, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

#### Verse 15

The Lord will come with fire "Jehovah shall come as a fire" - For באש baesh, in fire, the Septuagint had in their copy כאש kaesh, as a fire; ὡς πυρ.

To render his anger with fury "To breathe forth his anger in a burning heat" - Instead of להשב lehashib, as pointed by the Masorettes, to render, I understand it as להשב lehashshib, to breathe, from נשב nashab.

ISAIAH 66: 16 For by fire will the LORD execute judgement, and by his sword, on all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

ISAIAH 66: 17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves to go to the gardens, behind one in the midst, eating pig's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, they shall come to an end together," says the LORD.

#### Verse 17

Behind one tree "After the rites of Achad" - The Syrians worshipped a god called Adad, Plin. Nat. Hist. 37:11; Macrob. Sat. 1:23. They held him to be the highest and greatest of the gods, and to be the same with Jupiter and the sun; and the name Adad, says Macrobius, signifies one; as likewise does the word Achad in Isaiah. Many learned men therefore have supposed, and with some probability, that the prophet means the same pretended deity. אחד achad, in the Syrian and Chaldean dialects, is חד chad; and perhaps by reduplication of the last letter to express perfect unity, it may have become חדד chadad, not improperly expressed by Macrobius Adad, without the aspirate. It was also pronounced by the Syrians themselves, with a weaker aspirate, חדד hadad, as in

Benhadad, Hadadezer, names of their kings, which were certainly taken from their chief object of worship. This seems to me to be a probable account of this name.

But the Masorettes correct the text in this place. Their marginal reading is **תחא** achath which is the same word, only in the feminine form; and so read thirty MSS. (six ancient) and the two oldest editions. This Le Clerc approves, and supposes it to mean Hecate, or the moon; and he supports his hypothesis by arguments not at all improbable. See his note on the place.

Whatever the particular mode of idolatry which the prophet refers to might be, the general sense of the place is perfectly clear. But the Chaldee and Syriac, and after them Symmachus and Theodotion, cut off at once all these difficulties, by taking the word **תחא** achad in its common meaning, not as a proper name; the two latter rendering the sentence thus: *Οπισω αλληλων εν μεσω εσθιοντων το κρεας το χοιρειον*; "One after another, in the midst of those that eat swine's flesh." I suppose they all read in their copies **תחא תחא** achad achad, one by one, or perhaps **תחא רחא תחא** achad achar achad, one after another. See a large dissertation on this subject in Davidis Millii *Dissertationes Selectae*, Dissert. vi. - L.

I know not what to make of this place; it is certain that our translation makes no sense, and that of the learned prelate seems to me too refined. Kimchi interprets this of the Turks, who are remarkable for ablutions. "Behind one in the midst" he understands of a large fish-pond placed in the middle of their gardens. Others make **תחא** achad a deity, as above; and a deity of various names it is supposed to be, for it is Achad, and Chad, and Hadad, and Achath, and Hecat, an Assyrian idol. Behynd the fyrst tree or the gate withine forth. - Old MS. Bible.

ISAIAH 66: 18 "For I know their works and their thoughts: the time comes, that I will gather all nations and languages; and they shall come, and shall see my glory.

#### Verse 18

For I know their works - A word is here lost out of the present text, leaving the text quite imperfect. The word is **יודע** yodea, knowing, supplied from the Syriac. The Chaldee had the same word in the copy before him, which he paraphrases by **קדמי גלן** kedemi gelon, their deeds are manifest before me; and the Aldine and Complutensian editions of the Septuagint acknowledge the same word **επισταμαι**, which is verified by MS. Pachom. and the Arabic version. I think there can be little doubt of its being genuine. The concluding verses of this chapter refer to the complete restoration of the Jews, and to the destruction of all the enemies of the Gospel of Christ, so that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. *Talia saecla currite! Lord, hasten the time!*

It shall come "And I come" - For **באה** baah, which will not accord with any thing in the sentence, I read **בא** ba, with a MS.; the participle answering to **יודע** yodea, with which agree the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate. Perhaps it ought to be **ובא** veba, when I shall come, Syr.; and so the Septuagint, according to Edit. Ald. and Complut., and Cod. Marchal.

ISAIAH 66: 19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the islands afar off, who have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

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 Verse 19

That draw the bow - I much suspect that the words **מֹשְׁחֵי קֶשֶׁת** moshechey kesheth, who draw the bow, are a corruption of the word **מֶשֶׁךְ** meshek, Moschi, the name of a nation situated between the Euxine and Caspian seas; and properly joined with **תּוּבַל** tubal, the Tibareni. See Bochart, Phaleg. Isa 3:12. The Septuagint have **μῦσοι**, without any thing of the drawers of the bow: the word being once taken for a participle, the bow was added to make sense of it **קֶשֶׁת** kesheth, the bow, is omitted in a MS. and by the Septuagint.

That have not heard my fame "Who never heard my name" - For **שְׁמִי** shimi, my fame, I read, with the Septuagint and Syriac, **שְׁמִי** shemi, my name.

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ISAIAH 66: 20 They shall bring all your brothers out of all the nations for an offering to the LORD, on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and on dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, as the children of Israel bring their offering in a clean vessel into the LORD's house.

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## Verse 20

And in chariots "And in counes" - There is a sort of vehicle much used in the east, consisting of a pair of hampers or cradles, thrown across a camel's back, one on each side; in each of which a person is carried. They have a covering to defend them from the rain and the sun. Thevenot calls them counes, 1 p. 356. Maillet describes them as covered cages hanging on both sides of a camel. "At Aleppo," says Dr. Russell, "women of inferior condition in longer journeys are commonly stowed, one on each side of a mule, in a sort of covered cradles." Nat. Hist. of Aleppo, p. 89. These seem to be what the prophet means by the word **צַבִּיִּם** tsabbim. Harmer's Observations, 1 p. 445.

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ISAIAH 66: 21 Of them also will I take for priests and for Levites," says the LORD.

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## Verse 21

And for Levites - For **לַלְוִיִּם** laleviyim, fifty-nine MSS., (eight ancient), have **וּלְלֵוִיִּם** velaleviyim, adding the conjunction **ו** vau, which the sense seems necessarily to require: and so read all the ancient versions. See Jos 3:3, and the various readings on that place in Kennicott's Bible.

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ISAIAH 66: 22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me," says the LORD, "so your seed and your name shall remain.

ISAIAH 66: 23 It shall happen, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me," says the LORD.

ISAIAH 66: 24 "They shall go out, and look on the dead bodies of the men who have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they will be loathsome to all mankind."

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Verse 24

For their worm shall not die - These words of the prophet are applied by our blessed Savior, Mar 9:44, to express the everlasting punishment of the wicked in Gehenna, or in hell. Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, was very near to Jerusalem to the south-east: it was the place where the idolatrous Jews celebrated that horrible rite of making their children pass through the fire, that is, of burning them in sacrifice to Moloch. To put a stop to this abominable practice, Josiah defiled, or desecrated, the place, by filling it with human bones, 2Kgs 23:10, 2Kgs 23:14; and probably it was the custom afterwards to throw out the carcasses of animals there, when it also became the common burying place for the poorer people of Jerusalem. Our Savior expressed the state of the blessed by sensible images; such as paradise, Abraham's bosom, or, which is the same thing, a place to recline next to Abraham at table in the kingdom of heaven. See Mat 8:11. Coenabat Nerva cum paucis. Veiento proxies, atque etiam in sinu recumbebat. "The Emperor Nerva supped with few. Veiento was the first in his estimation, and even reclined in his bosom." Plin. Epist. 4:22. Compare Joh 13:23; for we could not possibly have any conception of it but by analogy from worldly objects. In like manner he expressed the place of torment under the image of Gehenna; and the punishment of the wicked by the worm which there preyed on the carcasses, and the fire that consumed the wretched victims. Marking however, in the strongest manner, the difference between Gehenna and the invisible place of torment; namely, that in the former the suffering is transient: - the worm itself which preys upon the body, dies; and the fire which totally consumes it, is soon extinguished: - whereas in the figurative Gehenna the instruments of punishment shall be everlasting, and the suffering without end; "for there the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

These emblematical images, expressing heaven and hell, were in use among the Jews before our Savior's time; and in using them he complied with their notions. "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," says the Jew to our Savior, Luk 14:15. And in regard to Gehenna, the Chaldee paraphrase as I observed before on Isa 30:33, renders everlasting or continual burnings by "the Gehenna of everlasting fire." And before his time the son of Sirach, 7:17, had said, "The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms." So likewise the author of the book of Judith, chap. 16:17: "Wo to the nations rising up against my kindred: the Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh;" manifestly referring to the same emblem. - L.

Kimchi's conclusion of his notes on this book is remarkable: - "Blessed be God who hath created the mountains and the hills,

And hath endued me with strength to finish the book of salvation:

He shall rejoice us with good tidings and reports;

He shall show us a token for good: -

And the end of his miracles he shall cause to approach us."

Several of the Versions have a peculiarity in their terminations: -

And they shall be to a satiety of sight to all flesh.



Vulgate.

And thei schul ben into fyllyng of sigt to all fleshe.

Old MS. Bible.

And they shall be as a vision to all flesh.

Septuagint.

And the wicked shall be punished in hell till the righteous shall say, - It is enough.

Chaldee.

They shall be an astonishment to all flesh; So that they shall be a spectacle to all beings.

Syriac.

The end of the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet.

Praise to God who is truly praiseworthy.

Arabic.

One of my old Hebrew MSS. after the twenty-first verse repeats the twenty-third: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."