

CHAPTER 38

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 38

This chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's sickness, recovery, and thanksgiving on that account. His sickness, and the nature of it, and his preparation for it, as directed to by the prophet, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:1), his prayer to God upon it, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:2,3) the answer returned unto it, by which he is assured of living fifteen years more, and of the deliverance and protection of the city of Jerusalem from the Assyrians, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:4-6), the token of his recovery, the sun going back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:7,8), a writing of Hezekiah's upon his recovery, in commemoration of it, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:9), in which he represents the deplorable condition he had been in, the terrible apprehensions he had of things, especially of the wrath and fury of the Almighty, and his sorrowful and mournful complaints, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:10-14), he observes his deliverance according to the word of God; expresses his faith in it; promises to retain a cheerful sense of it; owning that it was by the promises of God that he had lived as other saints did; and ascribes his preservation from the grave to the love of God to him, of which the forgiveness of his sins was an evidence, (²³⁸⁵Isaiah 38:15-17), the end of which salvation was, that he might praise the Lord, which he determined to do, on stringed instruments, (²³⁸⁵Isaiah 38:18-20), and the chapter is closed with observing the means of curing him of his boil; and that it was at his request that the sign of his recovery was given him, (²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:21,22).

Ver. 1. *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death,* &c.] This was about the time that Sennacherib invaded Judea, threatened Jerusalem with a siege, and his army was destroyed by an angel from heaven; but, whether it was before or after the destruction of his army, interpreters are not agreed. Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi upon the place, and others^{f728}, say, it was three days before the ruin of Sennacherib's army; and that it was on the third day that Hezekiah recovered, and went up to the temple, that the destruction was; and that it was the first day of the passover; and that this was before the city of Jerusalem was delivered from him; and the fears of him seem clear from (²³⁸⁶Isaiah 38:6) and some are of opinion that his

sickness was occasioned by the consternation and terror he was thrown into, by reason of the Assyrian army, which threatened ruin to him and his kingdom. Though Josephus^{f729} says, that it was after his deliverance from it, and when he had given thanks to God for it; however, it is certain it was in the same year, since it was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign that Sennacherib invaded Judea, and from this his sickness and recovery fifteen years were added to his days, and he reigned no more than twenty nine years, (~~2~~ Kings 8:2,13 20:6) what this sickness was cannot be said with certainty; some have conjectured it to be the plague, since he had a malignant ulcer, of which he was cured by a plaster of figs; but, be it what it will, it was a deadly one in its own nature, it was a sickness unto death, a mortal one; though it was not eventually so, through the interposition of divine power, which prevented it. The reason of this sickness, which Jarchi gives, that it was because he did not take to himself a wife, is without foundation; more likely the reason of it was, to keep him humble, and that he might not be lifted up with the deliverance, or be more thankful for it:

and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him: not of his own accord to visit him, but was sent by the Lord with a message to him:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; or, “give orders to thine house”^{f730}: to the men of thine house, as the Targum; his domestics, his counsellors and courtiers, what they should do after his death; how his personal estate should be disposed of; how the throne should be filled up; who should succeed him, since he had no son: the family and secular affairs of men should be put in order, and direction given for the management of them, and their substance and estates should be disposed of by will before their death; and much more a concern should be shown for the setting in order their spiritual affairs, or that they may be habitually ready for death and eternity;

for thou shall die, and not live: or not recover of thy sickness, as the Targum adds: “for thou art a dead man”, as it may be rendered, in all human appearance; the disease being deadly, and of which he could not recover by the help of any medicine; nothing but almighty power could save him; and this is said, to observe to him his danger, to give him the sentence of death in himself, and to set him a praying, as it did.

Ver. 2. *Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, &c.*] Not figuratively to the wall of his heart, as Jerom; but literally, either to the wall of his bedchamber where he lay sick, that his tears might not be seen, and his

prayers interrupted, and that he might deliver them with more privacy, freedom, and fervency; or else to the wall of the temple, as the Targum, towards which good men used to look when they prayed, (^{<1088>}1 Kings 8:38 ^{<110>}Daniel 6:10), which was a type of Christ, to whom we should have respect in all our petitions, as being the only Mediator between God and man: and prayed unto the Lord; as follows:

Ver. 3. *And said, remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, &c.*] He puts the Lord in mind of his good walk and works, which are never forgotten by him, though they may seem to be: and this he the rather did, because it might be thought that he had been guilty of some very enormous crime, which he was not conscious to himself he had; it being unusual to cut men off in the prime of their days, but in such a case:

how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; or rather, “that I have walked before thee”, as Noldius, since the manner of walking is declared in express terms; so the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and others; that the course of his life in the sight of God, having the fear of him upon his heart, and before his eyes, was according to the truth of his word, institutions, and appointments; that he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his soul; and however imperfect his services were, as no man so walks as to be free from sin, yet he was sincere and without dissimulation in the performance of them; his intentions were upright, his views were purely to the glory of God:

and have done that which is good in thy sight; agreeably both to the moral and ceremonial law, in his own private and personal capacity as a man, in the administration of justice in his government as a king; and particularly in reforming the nation; in destroying idols, and idol worship; in breaking in pieces the brazen serpent, when used to idolatrous purposes; and in setting up the pure worship of God, and his ordinances; and which he does not plead as meritorious, but mentions as well pleasing to God, which he graciously accepts of, and encourages with promises of reward:

and Hezekiah wept sore; not only because of his death, the news of which might be shocking to nature; but because of the distressed condition the nation would be in, having now the Assyrian army in it, or at least not wholly free from fears, by reason of that monarch; and besides, had no son to succeed him in the throne, and so difficulties and troubles might arise within themselves about a successor; and it may be, what troubled him

most of all was, that dying without issue, the Messiah could not spring from his seed.

Ver. 4. *Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, &c.*] Before he had got out into the middle court, (¹²¹⁰2 Kings 20:4):

saying, as follows:

Ver. 5. *Go and say to Hezekiah, &c.*] Turn again, and tell him, (¹²¹⁵2 Kings 20:5):

thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father; this is said, to show that he remembered the covenant he made with David his father, concerning the kingdom, and the succession of his children in it; and that he had a regard to him, as walking in his steps:

I have heard thy prayer; and therefore was not surely a foolish one, as Luther somewhere calls it, since it was heard and answered so quickly:

I have seen thy tears; which he shed in prayer, and so studiously concealed from others, when he turned his face to the wall:

behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years; that is, to the days he had lived already, and beyond which it was not probable, according to the nature of his disease, he could live; and besides, he had the sentence of death pronounced on him, and had it within himself, nor did he pray for his life; so that these fifteen years were over and above what he could or did expect to live; and because it was unusual in such a case, and after such a declaration made, that a man should live, and especially so long a time after, it is ushered in with a “behold”, as a note of admiration; it being a thing unheard of, and unprecedented, and entirely the Lord’s doing, and which, no doubt, was marvellous in the eyes of the king.

Ver. 6. *And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, &c.*] So that it seems that Hezekiah’s sickness was while the king of Assyria was near the city of Jerusalem, and about to besiege it, and before the destruction of the Assyrian army; unless this is said to secure Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from all fears of a return of that king, to give them fresh trouble:

and I will defend this city; from the present siege laid to it, ruin threatened it, or from any attack upon it, by the Assyrian monarch.

Ver. 7. *And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, &c.*] And which it seems Hezekiah asked, and it was put to him which he would choose, whether the shadow on the sundial should go forward or backward ten degrees, and he chose the latter, (^{<1208>}2 Kings 20:8-11), which was a token confirming and assuring

that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; recover Hezekiah from his sickness, so that on the third day he should go up to the temple; have fifteen years added to his days; and the city of Jerusalem protected from the attempts of the Assyrian monarch.

Ver. 8. *Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, &c.*] Or lines made on a dial plate, to show the progress of the sun, and what time of day it was. Some think only the shadow was brought back by the power of God, the sun keeping its course as usual; but in the next clause the sun is expressly said to return ten degrees: besides, it is not easy to conceive how the shadow of the sun should go back, unless the sun itself did; if it had been only the shadow of it on Ahaz's dial, it would not have fallen under the notice of other nations, or have been the subject of their inquiry, as it was of the Babylonians, (^{<4431>}2 Chronicles 32:31):

which is gone down on the sundial of Ahaz, the first sundial we read of; and though there might be others at this time, yet the lines or degrees might be more plain in this; and besides, this might be near the king's bedchamber, and to which he could look out at, and see the wonder himself, the shadow to return ten degrees backward; what those degrees, lines, or marks on the dial showed, is not certain. The Targum makes them to be hours, paraphrasing the words thus;

“behold, I will bring again the shadow of the stone of hours, by which the sun is gone down on the dial of Ahaz, backwards ten degrees; and the sun returned ten hours on the figure of the stone of hours, in which it went down;”

but others think they pointed out half hours; and others but quarters of hours; but, be it which it will, it matters not, the miracle was the same:

so the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down; and so this day was longer by these degrees than a common day, be they what they will, and according as we suppose the sun went back, suddenly, or as it usually moved, though in a retrograde way, and made the same progress again through these degrees. The Jews have a fable, that the day King

Ahaz died was shortened ten hours, and now lengthened the same at this season, which brought time right again. According to Gussetius, these were not degrees or marks on a sundial, to know the time of day, for this was a later invention, ascribed to Anaximene's, a disciple of Anaximander^{f731}, two hundred years after this; but were steps or stairs built by Ahaz, to go up from the ground to the roof of the house, on the outside of it, and which might consist of twenty steps or more; and on which the sun cast a shadow all hours of the day, "and this declined ten of these steps", which might be at the window of Hezekiah's bedchamber.^{f732}

Ver. 9. *The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, &c.*] The Septuagint and Arabic versions call it a "prayer": but the Targum, much better,

"a writing of confession;"

in which the king owns his murmurings and complaints under his affliction, and acknowledges the goodness of God in delivering him out of it: this he put into writing, as a memorial of it, for his own benefit, and for the good of posterity; very probably he carried this with him to the temple, whither he went on the third day of his illness, and hung it up in some proper place, that it might be read by all, and be sung by the priests and the Levites; and the Prophet Isaiah has thought fit to give it a place among his prophecies, that it might be transmitted to future ages:

when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness; or, "on his being sick^{f733}"; on his sickness and recovery, which were the subject matter of his writing, as the following show; though it is true also of the time of writing it, which was after he had been ill, and was well again.

Ver. 10. *I said, in the cutting off of my days, &c.*] When he was told that he should die, and he believed he should; this he calls a "cutting off" in allusion to the weaver's web, (^{<2382>}Isaiah 38:12) and a cutting off "his days", he being now in the prime of his age, about thirty nine or forty years of age, and not arrived to the common period of life, and to which, according to his constitution, and the course of nature, he might have attained. The Jews call such a death a cutting off, that is, by the hand of God, which is before a man is fifty years of age. The Vulgate Latin version is, "in the midst of my days"; as it was, according to the common term of life, being threescore and ten, and at most eighty, (^{<4900>}Psalms 90:10):

I shall go to the gates of the grave; and enter there into the house appointed for all living, which he saw were open for him, and ready to receive him:

I am deprived of the residue of my days; the other thirty or forty years which he might expect to have lived, according to the course of nature; of these he was bereaved, according to the sentence of death he now had in him; what if the words were rendered, “I am visited with more of my years^{f734}?” and so the sense be, when I was apprehensive that I was just going to be cut off, and to be deprived of the days and years I might have lived, and hoped I should, to the glory of God, and the good of my subjects; just when I saw it was all over with me, I had a gracious visit or message from the Lord, assuring me that fifteen years should be added to my life: and so this is mentioned as a singular instance of divine goodness, in the midst of his distress; and to this sense the Targum agrees,

“because he remembered me for good, an addition was made to my years.”

Ver. 11. *I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living,* &c.] Not any more, in this world, though in the other, and that more clearly, even face to face: his meaning is, that he should no more see him in the glass of the word; no more praise him in his house; worship him in his temple; enjoy him in his ordinances; and see his beauty, power, and glory, in the sanctuary; and confess unto him, and praise his name^{f735}. The Targum is,

“I shall no more appear before the face of the Lord in the land of the house of his Shechinah, in which is length of life; and I shall no more serve him in the house of the sanctuary.”

In the Hebrew text it is, “I shall not see Jah, Jah”; a word, the same with Jehovah; and is repeated, to show the vehemency of his affection for the Lord, and his ardent desire of communion with him: unless it should be rendered, “I shall not see the Lord’s Lord in the land of the living^{f736}”; or the Lord’s Christ in the flesh:

I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world; or “time”^{f737}; of this fading transitory world, which will quickly cease, as the word for it signifies: next to God, his concern was, that he should no more enjoy the company of men, of his subjects, of his courtiers, of his relations,

companions, and acquaintance; particularly of the saints, the excellent in the earth.

Ver. 12. *Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent, &c.]* Or, my habitation^{f738}; meaning the earthly house of his tabernacle, his body; this was just going, in his apprehension, to be unpinned, and removed like a shepherd's tent, that is easily taken down, and removed from place to place. Some understand it of the men of his age or generation; so the Targum,

“from the children of my generation my days are taken away; they are cut off, and removed from me; they are rolled up as a shepherd's tent;”

which being made of skins, as tents frequently were, such as the Arabian shepherds used, were soon taken down, and easily rolled and folded up and carried elsewhere:

I have cut off like a weaver my life; who, when he has finished his web, or a part of it, as he pleases, cuts it off from the loom, and disposes of it: this Hezekiah ascribes to himself, either that by reason of his sins and transgressions he was the cause of his being taken away by death so soon; or this was the thought he had within himself, that his life would now be cut off, as the weaver's web from the loom; for otherwise he knew that it was the Lord that would do it, whenever it was, as in the next clause:

he will cut me off with pining sickness; which was now upon him, wasting and consuming him apace: or, “will cut me off from the thrum”^{f739}; keeping on the metaphor of the weaver cutting off his web from the thrum, fastened to the beam of his loom:

from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me; he means the Lord by “he” in the preceding clause, and in this he addresses him; signifying that the affliction was so sharp and heavy upon him, which was the first day of it, that he did not expect to live till night, but that God would put a period to his days, fill them up, and finish his life, and dispatch him out of this world.

Ver. 13. *I reckoned till morning, &c.]* Or, “I set my time till the morning”^{f740}; he fixed and settled it in his mind that he could live no longer than to the morning, if he lived so long; he thought he should have died before the night came on, and, now it was come, the utmost he could

propose to himself was to live till morning; that was the longest time he could reckon of. According to the accents, it should be rendered, “I reckoned till morning as a lion”; or “I am like until the morning as a lion”; or, “I likened until the morning (God) as a lion”; I compared him to one; which agrees with what follows. The Targum is,

“I roared until morning, as a lion roars;”

through the force of the disease, and the pain he was in: or rather,

“I laid my bones together until the morning as a lion; “so indeed as a lion God” hath broken all my bones^{f741}.”

so will he break all my bones; or, “it will break”; that is, the sickness, as Kimchi and Jarchi; it lay in his bones, and so violent was the pain, that he thought all his bones were breaking in pieces; such is the case in burning fevers, as Jerom observes; so Kimchi interprets it of a burning fever, which is like a fire in the bones. Some understand this of God himself, to which our version directs, who may be said to do this by the disease: compare with this (~~1816~~ Job 16:14) and to this sense the following clause inclines:

from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me; he lived till morning, which was more than he expected, and was the longest time he could set himself; and now be reckoned that before night it would be all over with him as to this world. This was the second day of his illness; and the third day he recovered, and went to the temple with his song of praise.

Ver. 14. *Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter*, &c.] Rather, “like a crane and a swallow”, like both; sometimes loud and clamorous, like a crane^{f742}, when the pain was very acute and grievous; and sometimes very low, through weakness of body, like the twittering of a swallow; or the moan he made under his affliction was like the mournful voices of these birds at certain times. Some think he refers to his prayers, which were quick and short, and expressed not with articulate words, but in groans and cries; at least were not regular and orderly, but interrupted, and scarce intelligible, like the chattering of the birds mentioned:

I did mourn as a dove; silently and patiently, within himself, for his sins and transgressions; and because of his afflictions, the fruit of them:

mine eyes fail with looking upwards; or, “on high”; or, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions express it, “to the height of heaven”; to the Lord there,

whose Shechinah, as the Targum, is in the highest heavens: in his distress he looked up to heaven for help, but none came; he looked and waited till his eyes were weak with looking, and he could look no longer; both his eyes and his heart failed him, and he despaired of relief; and the prayer he put up was as follows:

O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me; or, “it oppresseth me^{f743}”; that is, the disease; it lay so heavy upon him, it bore him down with the weight of it, he could not stand up under it; it had seized him, and crushed him; it held him fast, and he could not get clear of it; and therefore entreats the Lord to “undertake” for him, to be his surety for good, as in (⁴³⁹¹²Psalm 119:122), he represents his disease as a bailiff that had arrested him, and was carrying him to the prison of the grave; and therefore prays that the Lord would bail him, or rescue him out of his hands, that he might not go down to the gates of the grave. So souls oppressed with the guilt of sin, and having fearful apprehensions of divine justice, should apply to Christ their surety, and take refuge in his undertakings, where only peace and safety are to be enjoyed. So Gussetius renders the words, “I have unrighteousness, be surety for me”^{f744}; and takes them to be a confession of Hezekiah, acknowledging himself guilty of unrighteousness, praying and looking to Christ the Son of God, and to his suretyship engagements, who, though not yet come to fulfil them, certainly would.

Ver. 15. *What shall I say?* &c.] In a way of praise and thankfulness, for the mercies promised and received; I know not what to say; I want words to express the gratitude of my heart for the kindness bestowed. What shall I render to God for all his benefits? So the Targum,

“what praise shall I utter, and I will say it before him?”

for here begins the account of his recovery, and his thanksgiving for it:

he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it; the Lord had sent him a message by the prophet, and assured him that he should recover, and on the third day go up to the temple; and now he had performed what he had promised, he was restored, and was come to the house of God with his thank offering; whatever the Lord says, he does; what he promises, he brings to pass:

I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul; before he did not reckon of a day to live, now he speaks of his years, having fifteen added to his days, during which time he should “go softly”, in a thoughtful

“meditating” frame of mind^{f745}; frequently calling to remembrance, and revolving in his mind, his bitter affliction, and recovery out of it, acknowledging the goodness and kindness of God unto him: or leisurely,

step by step, without fear of any enemies, dangers, or death, having a promise of such a length of time to live: or go pleasantly and

cheerfully, after the bitterness of my soul^{f746}, as it may be rendered; that is, after it is over, or because of deliverance from it. So the Targum,

“with what shall I serve him, and render to him for all the years he hath added to my life, and hath delivered me from the bitterness of my soul?”

Ver. 16. *O Lord, by these things men live*, &c.] Not by bread only, but by the word of God: by the promise of God, and by his power performing it; and by his favour and goodness continually bestowed; it is in him, and by his power and providence, that they live and move, and have their being, and the continuance of it; and it is his lovingkindness manifested to them that makes them live comfortably and go on cheerfully:

and in all these things is the life of my spirit; what kept his soul in life were the same things, the promise, power, and providence of God; what revived his spirit, and made him comfortable and cheerful, was the wonderful love and great goodness of God unto him, in appearing to him, and for him, and delivering him out of his sore troubles. Ben Melech renders and gives the sense of the words thus; “to all will I declare and say, that in these”, in the years of addition (the fifteen years added to his days) “are the life of my spirit”; so Kimchi. The Targum interprets it of the resurrection of the dead,

“O Lord, concerning all the dead, thou hast said, that thou wilt quicken them; and before them all thou hast quickened my spirit:”

so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live; or rather, “and” or “for thou hast recovered^{f747} me, and made me to live”; for the Lord had not only promised it, but he had done it, (²⁸⁸⁵Isaiah 38:15), and so the Targum,

“and hast quickened me, and sustained me.”

Ver. 17. *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness*, &c.] Meaning not that instead of peace and prosperity, which he expected would ensue upon the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, came a bitter affliction upon him; for he

is not now dwelling on that melancholy subject; but rather the sense is, that he now enjoyed great peace and happiness, though he had been in great bitterness; for the words may be rendered, “behold, I am in peace, I had great bitterness”; or thus, “behold my great bitterness is unto peace”: or, “he has turned it into peace”^{f748}; it has issued in it, and this is my present comfortable situation: “but”, or rather,

and thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: the grave, where bodies rot and corrupt, and are quite abolished, as the word signifies; (see ^{<1081B>}Psalm 30:3) or “thou hast embraced my soul from the pit of corruption”^{f749}; it seems to be an allusion to a tender parent, seeing his child sinking in a pit, runs with open arms to him, and embraces him, and takes him out. This may be applied to a state of nature, out of which the Lord in love delivers his people; which is signified by a pit, or dark dungeon, a lonely place, a filthy one, very uncomfortable, where they are starving and famishing; a pit, wherein is no water, (^{<3811B>}Zechariah 9:11) and may fitly be called a pit of corruption, because of their corrupt nature, estate, and actions; out of this the Lord brings his people at conversion, and that because of his great love to their souls, and his delight in them; or it may be applied to their deliverance from the bottomless pit of destruction, which is owing to the Lord’s being gracious to them, and having found a ransom for them, his own Son, (^{<1833B>}Job 33:24), and to this sense the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions seem to incline; “for thou hast delivered my soul that it might not perish”: in love to their souls, and that they may not perish, he binds them up in the bundle of life, with the Lord their God; he redeems their souls from sin, Satan, and the law; he regenerates, renews, and converts them, and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom and glory; in order to which, and to prevent their going down to the pit, they are put into the hands of Christ, redeemed by his precious blood, and are turned out of the broad road that leads to destruction:

for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back; as loathsome and abominable, and so as not to be seen by him; for though God sees all the sins of his people with his eye of omniscience, and in his providence takes notice of them, and chastises for them, yet not with his eye of avenging justice; because Christ has took them on himself, and made satisfaction for them, and an end of them; they are removed from them as far as the east is from the west, and no more to be seen upon them; nor will they be any more set before his face, or in the light of his countenance; but as they are

out of sight they will be out of mind, never more remembered, but forgotten; as what is cast behind the back is seen and remembered no more. The phrase is expressive of the full forgiveness of sins, even of all sins; (see ~~185D~~ Psalm 85:2 103:3,4), the object of God's love is the souls of his people; the instance of it is the delivery of them from the pit of corruption; the evidence of it is the pardon of their sins.

Ver. 18. *For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee, &c.]* That is, they that are in the grave, and under the power of death, they cannot celebrate the praises of God with their bodily organs; their souls may praise him in heaven, but they in their bodies cannot till the resurrection morn, or as long as they are under the dominion of the grave; so the Targum,

“they that are in the grave cannot confess before thee, and the dead cannot praise thee;”

in like manner the Septuagint and Arabic versions: this shows the design of God in restoring him from his sickness, and the view he himself had in desiring life, which was to praise the Lord; and which end could not have been answered had he died, and been laid in the grave:

they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth: for the performance of promises, in which the truth and faithfulness of God appear; or for the Messiah, the truth of all the types of the former dispensation; those that go down to the pit of the grave, or are carried and laid there, can have no exercise of faith and hope concerning these things.

Ver. 19. *The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day, &c.]* Every one of the living, or such who are both corporeally and spiritually alive; and therefore the word is repeated; none but such who are alive in a corporeal sense can praise the Lord in this world; and none but such who are spiritually alive can praise him aright, and such do under a true sense of the greatness of his mercies, and of their own unworthiness; and such a one was Hezekiah; for the words may be rendered, “as I am this day^{f750}”; that is, alive in both the above senses; and so did he praise God, in such a spiritual manner, even on the day he committed this to writing, and was now in the temple offering up this thanksgiving:

the father to the children shall make known thy truth: not meaning himself, for at this time he had no children; though, no doubt, when he had any, as he afterwards had, particularly Manasseh, he took care to acquaint him

with the truth and faithfulness of God in the fulfilling of his promises to him; and which every religious parent would do, and so transmit the memory thereof to future ages.

Ver. 20. *The Lord was ready to save me*, &c.] Or, “the Lord to save me^{f751}”; he was at hand to save him; he was both able and willing to save him; he was a present help in time of need; he arose for his help, and that right early; he very quickly delivered him out of his distress; he, who one day expected death every moment, was the next day in the temple praising God:

therefore will we sing my songs; which were made by him, or concerning him, or which he ordered to be sung, as he did the Psalms of David, (^{4EB}2 Chronicles 29:30):

to the stringed instruments: which were touched with the fingers, or struck with a quill or bow; which distinguishes them from wind instruments, which were blown with the mouth; each of these were used in the temple service:

all the days of our life; he had before said “we will sing”, meaning his family and his friends with him, his courtiers, princes, and nobles, or he and the singers of Israel; and this he determined to do as long as he and they lived; signifying, that the mercy granted would never be forgotten by him, as well as there would be new mercies every day, which would call for praise and thankfulness: and this he proposed to do

in the house of the Lord; in the temple; not only privately, but publicly; not in his closet and family only, but in the congregation of the people; that the goodness of God to him might be more known, and the praise and glory given him be the greater.

Ver. 21. *For Isaiah had said*, &c.] Before the above writing was made, which ends in the preceding verse; for this and the following are added by Isaiah, or some other person, taken out of (⁴²¹⁰2 Kings 20:7,8). The Septuagint version adds, “to Hezekiah”; but the speech seems rather directed to some of his servants, or those that were about him:

let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover; which was done, and he did accordingly recover. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and. Kimchi, all of them say, that this was a miracle within a miracle, since figs are hurtful to ulcers; and so say others; though it is

observed by some, that they are useful for the ripening and breaking of ulcers; however, it was not from the natural force of these figs, but by the power of God, that this cure was effected; for, without that, it was impossible so malignant an ulcer and so deadly a sickness as Hezekiah's were could have been cured, and especially so suddenly; nor were these figs used as a medicine, but as a sign of recovery, according to the Lord's promise, and as a means of assisting Hezekiah's faith in it.

Ver. 22. *Hezekiah also had said*, &c.] Unto Isaiah, as in (~~1218~~2 Kings 20:8):

what is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord? both of his health, and of his going up to the temple with thanksgiving for it; though the former is not here mentioned, as it is elsewhere; partly because it is supposed in the latter, for without that he could not have gone up to the temple; and partly because he was more solicitous for the worship and honour of God in his house, than for his health. The Syriac version transposes these verses, "Hezekiah had said, what is the sign? &c. and Isaiah had answered, let them take a lump of figs", &c. as if this latter was the sign; whereas it was that of the sun's going down ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, (~~2380~~Isaiah 38:7,8).