

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 2

This chapter contains the prophet's message from the Lord to the people of the Jews; in which they are reminded of their former favours, in order to aggravate their sins and transgressions they were chargeable with; to show their ingratitude and unkindness, and to bring them to a conviction and acknowledgment of their iniquities, without which punishment would be inflicted on them. The preface to this message is in (~~241D~~Jeremiah 2:1,2), and the discourse begins with an account of their former state and condition when they came out of Egypt; what kindness was shown them by the Lord, and what was returned to him by them; what they were to him, and how much regarded by him, (~~241D~~Jeremiah 2:2,3) and so far were they from being injured by him, that might cause them to depart from him, which they are desired to give attention to, that they were followed with various instances of goodness, which are particularly enumerated; and yet no notice was taken of them, neither by people, priests, pastors, and prophets, who were guilty of the grossest ignorance and wickedness, (~~241D~~Jeremiah 2:4-8), wherefore the Lord determines to plead with them and theirs; and charges them with such idolatry as was not to be found among the Gentiles, (~~240D~~Jeremiah 1:9-11) the heavens are called upon to be astonished at it; and the reason given for it, the ingratitude and folly of this people, (~~242D~~Jeremiah 2:12,13) in order to reclaim them, the Lord by the prophet proceeds to observe to them the corrections and chastisement they had already endured, being brought into bondage, their land wasted, cities burnt, and their glory taken from them; all which were owing to their revoltings and backslidings, and by which they might see what an evil and bitter thing sin is in its effects, (~~242D~~Jeremiah 2:14-19) and again reminds them of former favours; how that he loosed them from their yoke and bonds, when they promised to transgress no more, and yet did more and more; how he had raised them from a right seed, and planted them a noble vine, and yet they were sadly degenerated, and were guilty of such crimes as were not to be removed by anything done by them, (~~242D~~Jeremiah 2:20-22), and notwithstanding all this, they had the impudence to deny that they were tainted with idolatry, when they had been so guilty of it in the valley

of Hinnom, and elsewhere; and were comparable to the lustful dromedary and wild ass, and so fond of strange gods, that they thirsted after them, and were resolved to follow them, (²⁴¹²³Jeremiah 2:23-25) and yet the time would come when all ranks of men among them would be ashamed of their worship of stocks and stones, and in the time of their trouble call upon the Lord to save them, when they would be sent to their gods, who were as numerous as their cities, (²⁴¹²⁶Jeremiah 2:26-28) wherefore it was in vain to plead their innocence, when they were all so guilty, and had received correction without amendment, and had even slain the prophets of the Lord, (²⁴¹²⁹Jeremiah 2:29,30) and then the Lord again upbraids them with their ingratitude to him, who had been so good and kind to them; with their forgetfulness of him, illustrated by a maid's not forgetting her ornaments, and a bride her attire; with their artful methods to entice others to idolatry, and with their shedding of innocent blood; and yet, after all this, they asserted their innocence, and affirmed they had never sinned, (²⁴¹³¹Jeremiah 2:31-35), for all which sentence is pronounced against them, and punishment is threatened them, (²⁴¹³⁶Jeremiah 2:36,37).

Ver. 1. *Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying.*] Here begins the book, and Jeremiah's first sermon; and the following contains the message he was sent with, to which the preceding chapter is only a preface or introduction. The Targum calls it,

“the word of the prophecy from before the Lord.”

Ver. 2. *Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem,* etc.] Of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea. The prophet seems now to have been at Anathoth, and therefore is bid to go from thence to Jerusalem, and there prophesy before the people in it, as the Targum paraphrases it:

saying, thus saith the Lord, I remember thee; the Lord never forgets his people, though they sometimes think he does; it cannot be for they are engraven on the palms of his hands, yea, are set as a seal on his heart; nor does he forget his covenant with them, nor favours and blessings promised them: or, “I remember for thee”; or, “to thee”^{f21}: things in thy favour, and which will be to thy advantage:

the kindness of thy youth; either the lovingkindness of the Lord, which he had shown unto them; and the benefits, as the fruits thereof, which he had bestowed upon them in former times, when they were brought out of Egypt, and into the wilderness, which was the infancy both of their civil

and church state; (see ^{<2810>}Hosea 11:1) and when they received many favours from the Lord, (^{<2810>}Jeremiah 31:2) or the kindness of the people of Israel to the Lord, which was influenced and drawn forth by his love to them; though this can only be understood of some few of them, since the greater part tempted him, grieved, and provoked him:

the love of thine espousals; for the covenant God made with that people, when he brought them out of Egypt, was in the form of a marriage contract; he became their husband, and they became his spouse and bride; and which is an aggravation of their violation of it, (^{<2810>}Jeremiah 31:32) and this love, as before, may be understood either of the love of God to them, or of their love to him. The Targum interprets the former clause of the divine goodness to them, and this of their love to him, paraphrasing the whole thus,

“I remember unto you the blessings of ancient days, and the love of your fathers, who believed in my word:”

when thou wentest after me; the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; even the angel of God’s presence, who was their leader, guide, and preserver:

in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown; where they passed through many difficulties, and lived upon the providence of God, which, in a wonderful manner, supported them with the necessaries of life, which otherwise they could not have had. The Targum is,

“and they walked after my two messengers, after Moses and Aaron, in the wilderness forty years without food, in a land that was not sown.”

The whole of this may be applied to the case of God’s people at first conversion, when they are as newly born babes, and become young men in Christ; at which time they are openly espoused to him, having been secretly betrothed in covenant before; but now, through the efficacy of the Spirit attending the word, they are made willing to give up themselves to the Lord, and are espoused to one husband, Christ, (^{<2810>}2 Corinthians 11:2) at which time also great kindness and love is expressed both by the Lord to them, by quickening them who before were dead; by bringing them out of a most miserable condition; by speaking comfortably to them; by manifesting and applying his pardoning grace; and by openly taking them into his family: and also by them to him again; for the grace of love is then

implanted, which, as it is hearty and sincere, is very ardent and fervent; which shows itself by parting with and bearing all for Christ; and by a concern for his company and presence; and by a regard to his people, Gospel, ways, and worship; particularly by following him in his ordinances with great zeal, fervency, and constancy, even though attended with many difficulties and discouragements; and though the way may seem to flesh and blood very unpleasant and unpromising; all which is remembered by the Lord when forgotten by them; and when their love is become cold to him, he not only remembers them, and his love to them, which is always the same, but also their love to him.

Ver. 3. *Israel was holiness unto the Lord*, etc.] When first brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, by the Lord's choice and separation of them to be a holy people to him above all others; by covenant with him, and profession of him; and by his giving them holy laws, and placing a sanctuary among them; and by their high priest, who represented them in the most holy place; and had on the front of his mitre written,

holiness unto the Lord; so the spiritual Israel are chosen in Christ to be holy, and he is made sanctification to them; they are sanctified in him, and by his Spirit; they are called with a holy calling, and unto holiness; and, under the influence of grace, live holy lives and conversations, which the grace of God teaches, and young converts are remarkable for; their consciences being just awakened, and their hearts tender:

and the firstfruits of his increase; Israel was the first nation that God separated for himself; and this being the firstfruits, shows that he would separate others also, and take out of the Gentiles a people for his name, which he has since done; and the elect of God among the Israelites were the firstfruits of his chosen ones elsewhere; it were some of them that first believed in Christ, and received the firstfruits of the Spirit; and all converted ones are a kind of firstfruits of his creatures; the grace they receive at conversion is the firstfruits of a later increase of it, and even of eternal glory:

all that devour him shall offend; or, "all that eat him shall be guilty"^{f22}; and be condemned and punished, who eat up the Lord's people, as they eat bread; (see ~~19504~~ Psalm 53:4), these shall not go unpunished; for his people are as the apple of his eye, and whoever touches and hurts them fall under the divine displeasure, and will be looked upon as criminals and offenders, and will be judged and condemned as such. The allusion is to the eating of

the firstfruits, which only belonged to the priests; nor might any of the increase be eaten until the firstfruits were brought to them, (⁴²³⁰Leviticus 23:10,14,20). This is expressed in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text,

“whosoever eats of them (the firstfruits) is guilty of death; for as the beginning of the harvest, the sheaf of oblation, whoever eats of it before the priests, the sons of Aaron, have offered of it upon the altar, shall be guilty or condemned; so all that spoil the house of Israel shall be guilty or condemned;”

so Jarchi and Kimchi:

evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord; that is, the evil of punishment, either in this world, or in that which is to come, or in both.

Ver. 4. *Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.*] The Lord, by the prophet, having observed his great kindness to this people, what they were unto him, and what a regard he had for them, proceeds to upbraid them with their ingratitude, and requires an attention to what he was about to say; all are called upon, because, all were guilty. This respects the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the several families in them. The ten tribes had been long carried captive.

Ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me,* etc.] What injustice or injury has been done them? there is no unrighteousness in God, nor can any be done by him; or what unfaithfulness, or want of truth and integrity in performing promises, had they found in him? he never suffers his faithfulness to fail, or any of the good things he has promised. So the Targum,

“what falsehood have your fathers found in my word?”

none at all; God is a covenant keeping God:

that they are gone far from me; from my fear, as the Chaldee paraphrase; from the word and worship, and ways of God:

and have walked after vanity; after idols, the vanities of the Gentiles, (³⁴⁴²Jeremiah 14:22):

and are become vain? in their imaginations and in their actions, in their knowledge and in their practice, worshipping idols, as well as guilty of many other sins.

Ver. 6. *Neither said they, where is the Lord?* etc.] They did not ask after him, nor seek his face and favour, nor worship him, nor took any notice of the blessings he bestowed upon them:

that brought us up out of the land of Egypt? by means of Moses the deliverer, with a mighty hand, and outstretched arm; for, though Moses was the instrument, God was the efficient cause of the deliverance; the favour was his, and the glory of it ought to have been given to him:

that led us through the wilderness; of “Shur”, or of “Sin”, the desert of Arabia, (^(LXXII)Exodus 15:22 16:1) and a dreadful and terrible one it was:

through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death; where were scorpions, fiery serpents, drought, and no water, and so very dangerous as well as uncomfortable travelling; and yet through all this they were led, and wonderfully supplied and preserved;

through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt; there was no passenger in it, nor inhabitants on it, so that there were none to relieve them; whence it appears, that all their supply, support, and preservation, were from the Lord. The Jews^{f23} interpret this of the first man Adam, after this manner,

“all land, concerning which the first man decreed that it should be inhabited, it is inhabited; and all land, concerning which he did not decree it should be inhabited, it is not inhabited; and such they suggest was this wilderness;”

(see ^(LXXV)Deuteronomy 8:15).

Ver. 7. *And I brought you into a plentiful country,* etc.] “Into the land of Carmel”, as in the Hebrew text; that is,

“into the land of Israel, which was planted as Carmel,”

as the Targum paraphrases it; with wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olives; a land flowing with milk and honey, (^(LXXIII)Deuteronomy 8:8), so Ben Melech:

to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; of vineyards and oliveyards, which they had not planted, and for which they had never laboured, (³¹⁴¹Joshua 24:13):

but when ye entered ye defiled my land; which the Lord had chosen above all lands, where he would have a temple built for his worship, and where he would cause his Shechinah or glorious Majesty to dwell; but this they defiled by their sins and transgressions, and particularly by their idolatry, as follows:

that made mine heritage an abomination; by devoting it to the worship of idols, as the Targum paraphrases it.

Ver. 8. *The priests said not, where is the Lord?* etc.] Whose business it was to draw nigh to God, and offer the sacrifices of the people, and inquire of God for them; whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the law should be sought, they being the messengers of the Lord of hosts, (³¹⁴²Malachi 2:7):

and they that handle the law knew me not; the sanhedrim, according to Jarchi; or the lawyers and scribes, the Rabbins and doctors of the law, whose business it was to read and explain it; these did not understand it, nor the mind of God in it; and much less did they know him in a spiritual and evangelical manner; or as he is in Christ, and revealed in the Gospel:

the pastors also transgressed against me; kings, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi interpret it, who were pastors or shepherds in a civil sense; whose business it was to feed the people as the shepherd does his flock; that is, to guide and govern them by wholesome laws, by the laws of God; but, instead of this, they rebelled against the Lord, and transgressed his commands:

and the prophets prophesied by Baal; in his name; pretending to be inspired by that idol, and to receive the spirit of prophecy from him:

and walked after things that do not profit; the gods of the Gentiles, which could not supply them with the least temporal blessing, and much less give them spiritual and eternal ones; (see ³¹⁴³Jeremiah 14:22). This is to be understood of false prophets, as Ben Melech.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord*, etc.] Either verbally, by reasoning with them, and reproving them for their ignorance,

stupidity, and idolatry; or by deeds, inflicting punishment upon them; so the Targum,

“therefore I will take vengeance on you, or punish you, saith the Lord:”

and with your children's children will I plead; who imitate their parents, and do the same evil things as they, which the Lord knew they would; and was particularly true of the Jews in the times of Christ, for which reason wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

Ver. 10. *For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see*, etc.] Or, “to the isles of Chittim”^{f24}; so called from Kittim the son of Javan, (⁰¹⁰⁰Genesis 10:4) who, as Josephus says^{f25}, possessed the island of Chethima, now called Cyprus; and, from that, all islands, and most maritime places, are, by the Hebrews, called Chittim, he observes: it may regard all the islands in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas:

and send unto Kedar; which was in Arabia, and lay to the east, as Chittim to the west; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“send to the provinces of the Arabians:”

and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing; as what is inquired about in the following verse, a change of deities. All this is to be understood of the contemplation of the mind, and not of any corporeal journey to be taken, to inquire into this matter.

Ver. 11. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?* etc.] Though they are not by nature gods which they worship, only nominal and fictitious deities, yet they did not change them for others; but when they once embraced the worship of them, continued therein; so did the Chittim, the inhabitants of the isles, who though they traded to distant countries, from place to place; and so the Kedarenes, who dwelt in tents, and fed cattle, and moved from one desert to another, and from one pasture to another, as Jarchi observes; yet they carried their gods with them, and did not exchange them for new ones where they came. The Jewish writers say^{f26}, that the Kedarenes worshipped water, and the Chittim fire; and though they knew that water would quench fire, yet the latter would not change their gods. Kimchi and Abendana relate it just the reverse, and say the Kedarenes worshipped fire, and the Chittim water, which is most likely; and so it is said elsewhere^{f27}.

But my people have changed their glory; the true God, who is glorious in himself, and whom they should have glorified, and have counted it their highest honour and glory that they knew him, and were the worshippers of him; yet they changed him, their glory, into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, (^{<246D>}Psalm 106:20), wherefore it is justly added,

for that which doth not profit; meaning Baal, and such like idols; see the note on (^{<241B>}Jeremiah 2:8).

Ver. 12. *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this*, etc.] Meaning either the angels in heaven, or the heavens themselves, by a personification:

and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; all which may be signified by storms and tempests, by thunder and lightning, and by the sun's withdrawing its light. This is said to aggravate the wickedness committed, as if the heavens blushed and were ashamed, and were confounded and amazed at it; and as if, on account of it, the Jews deserved not the benefit of the heavens, and the orbs in them.

Ver. 13. *For my people have committed two evils*, etc.] Not but that they had committed more, but there were two principal ones they were guilty of, hereafter mentioned; and it was an aggravation of these crimes, that they were the professing people of God who had committed them: and it may be observed, that such sin; they are not without it, nor the commission of it; and may be left to fall into great sins, and yet remain his people; covenant interest cannot be dissolved; this should be considered not as an encouragement to sin, but as a relief under a sense of sin:

they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters; this is said of Christ, (^{<204E>}Song of Solomon 4:15 ^{<2417B>}Jeremiah 17:13,4), grace in him is compared to "water", it being cooling and refreshing, cleansing and fructifying; and to living water, because it quickens dead sinners, revives drooping saints, supports and maintains spiritual life, and issues in eternal life; and because it is perpetual and ever flowing; and to a "fountain", denoting that the original of it is in Christ, and the great abundance of it which is in him; it is as water in a fountain, in us as in streams: now to forsake this fountain is the first of these evils; which is done when the people of God are remiss in the exercise of faith on Christ; grow cold in their affections to him, and neglect his word and ordinances.

And hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; this is the other evil; and such are the world, and the things in it, when cleaved

unto, and rest and satisfaction are taken in them; the inventions and ordinances of men, when followed and attended to; moral duties, and evangelical services, when depended on; and even spiritual frames, when these are lived upon, and put in the room of Christ; yea, acts of faith, when they are rested in, and the object not so much regarded as should be: moreover, what may principally be intended are, in the first place, forsaking the worship of God, as the Targum interprets it, the assembling of themselves together to attend his service and ordinances, which is to forsake their own mercies; and, in the next place, following after idols, as the same paraphrase explains it, which have no divinity in them, and can yield no help and relief, or give any comfort, or afford any supply in time of distress and need. It is egregious folly to leave a fountain for a cistern, and especially a broken one: in a fountain the water is living, and always running, and ever springing up; not so in a cistern, and in a broken cistern there is none at all.

Ver. 14. *Is Israel a servant?* etc.] That he does not abide in the house, in his own land, but is carried captive, becomes subject to others, and is used as a slave; so the Targum,

“as a servant;”

is he not the Lord’s first born? are not the people of Israel called the children of the living God? how come they then to be treated not as children, as free men, but as servants? this cannot be owing to any breach of covenant or promise on God’s part, or to the failure of the blessing of national adoption bestowed on them; but to some sin or sins of theirs, which have brought them into this miserable condition:

is he a home born slave? or born in the house, of the handmaid, and so in the power of the master of the family in whose house he was born, (⁽¹²⁰⁴⁾Exodus 21:4) or the sense is, either Israel is a servant,

or a son of the family^{f28}, as some render the words; not the former, being not only the son of a free woman, but Jehovah’s firstborn; if the latter,

why is he spoiled? why is he delivered up to the spoilers? as the Targum; why should he be given up into the hands of the Babylonians, and become their prey? is it usual for fathers to suffer their children, or those born in their house, to be so used? some reason must be given for it.

Ver. 15. *The young lions roared upon him, and yelled*, etc.] Or, “gave out their voice”^{f29}; meaning the kings of the nations, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi explain it; and are to be understood of the kings of Assyria and Babylon, and particularly of Nebuchadnezzar; (see ^{<2817>}Jeremiah 50:17) compared to lions for their strength and cruelty; their “roaring” and “yelling design” the bringing forth of their armies against Israel, the noise of the battle, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, and the voice of the warrior:

and they made his land waste; all this is said as past, when it was yet to come, because of the certainty of it, and the sure accomplishment of these prophecies; for this respects the future desolation of the land of Israel at the Babylonish captivity:

his cities are burnt without inhabitant; not only Jerusalem was burnt with fire, (^{<2813>}Jeremiah 52:13), but other cities in the land of Israel, so that they were not inhabited: or, “they were desolate or destroyed”^{f30} as the Septuagint version, so that none could dwell in them; and so the Targum,

“her cities are desolate, without inhabitant.”

Kimchi’s father explains the word by **wj mX**, “budded”, or brought forth herbs or plants; for desolate places bring up plants; where there is no inhabitant, grass grows.

Ver. 16. *Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes*, etc.] These were cities in Egypt. Noph is the same with Moph in (^{<2806>}Hosea 9:6) and which we there rightly render Memphis; as Noph is here by the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and was formerly, as Pliny^{f31} says, the palace of the kings of Egypt. It is the same that is now called Alcairo, or Grand Cairo. According to Herodotus^{f32}, it was built by Menes, the first king of Egypt; and who also makes mention of a city of Egypt, called Momemphis^{f33}. Tahapanes is the same with Hanes in (^{<2804>}Isaiah 30:4), and here, in the Arabic version, is called Daphnes; and is thought by some to be the same with Daphnae Pelusiae, a city in Egypt. This Tahapanes was the metropolis of Egypt, and the seat of their kings; mention is made of Pharaoh’s house in it, in (^{<2809>}Jeremiah 43:9), now the inhabitants of these, called the children of them, and who are put for the people of Egypt in general, were the allies of the Jews, and in whom they trusted for help, when attacked by their enemies, (^{<2802>}Isaiah 30:2-4 31:1) and yet

even these have broken the crown of thy head; which is interpreted, by the Targum, of slaying their mighty men, and spoiling their goods; perhaps it had its accomplishment when Pharaohnecho king of Egypt came out against the king of Assyria, and Josiah king of Judah went out to meet him, and was slain by him at Megiddo; and his son Jehoahaz he put in bonds, and carried him to Egypt, and put his brother upon the throne, and took tribute of gold and silver of him, (^{<1273>}2 Kings 23:29-35).

Ver. 17. *Hast thou not procured this unto thyself*, etc.] All this desolation and destruction, both from the Egyptians and the Babylonians; their sin was the cause of it, their idolatry and forsaking the Lord their God, as follows: and so the Targum,

“is not this vengeance taken upon thee?”

that is, by the Lord, for their sins and transgressions; he suffered these nations to make them desolate on that account: to which agrees the Septuagint version, “hath not he done these things unto thee?” for what the Egyptians and Babylonians did were done by the will of the Lord, who suffered them for their correction: and the Arabic version renders it, “have not I done these things unto thee?” and the Syriac as a prophecy, as indeed so is the whole, “lo, so it shall be done to thee”; as is predicted in the foregoing verses, and that for the following reason:

in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God; as in (^{<2423>}Jeremiah 2:13), (See Gill on “^{<2423>}Jeremiah 2:13”), that is, as the Targum interprets it, the worship of the Lord thy God, his service, his statutes, and his ordinances; and followed after idols, and the worship of them; which is aggravated by the circumstance of time in which this was done:

when he led thee by the way? who showed thee the right way, and thou walkedst not in it, as the Targum; the way in which they should have gone, the way of their duty, and his commandments; and which would have been pleasant and profitable to them, and secured them from ruin and destruction.

Ver. 18. *And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt*, etc.] By worshipping of idols, in imitation of them; or by sending ambassadors thither for help, when they had their Lord, their God, so nigh, had they not forsaken him; nor had Josiah any business to go out against Pharaohnecho, (^{<4821>}2 Chronicles 35:21) and, contrary to the express word of God by the

Prophet Jeremy, did the Jews which remained in Judea go into Egypt, (~~3429~~Jeremiah 42:19 43:1-7).

To drink the waters of Sihor? which is the river Nile, as Jarchi interprets it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it “the waters of Geon”, or “Gihon”: and this also is the same with the Nile, as Josephus^{f34} affirms, who says,

“Geon, which runs through Egypt, is the same which the Greeks call Nile.”

So Jerom^{f35} from Eusebius,

“Geon is a river, which with the Egyptians is called Nile.”

The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “troubled water”; and such were the waters of the Nile, which had its name of Sihor from the blackness of it; and hence, by the Greeks^{f36}, was called Melas; and by the Latines^{f37}, Melo. Hence, as Braunius^{f38} observes, it was represented by a black stone, as other rivers by a white one; for which reason the black colour was very grateful to the Egyptians; and for the same reason Osiris, which is the very Nile itself, was reckoned black; and the ox Apis they worshipped was a black one, at least part of it, and was covered with black linen cloth; and its priests were also clothed in black, hence called Chemarim, (~~3805~~Hosea 10:5 ~~3004~~Zephaniah 1:4).

Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria; to go after their idolatrous practices, or to send to them for help; for this was the usual method of the Jews; when the Assyrians oppressed them, then they sent to Egypt for help; and when the Egyptians were upon them, then they applied to the Assyrians; and in both cases acted wrong, for they ought to have sought the Lord their God only:

to drink the waters of the river? of the river Euphrates. The sense is, that they preferred the waters of the Nile and of Euphrates, or the gods of the Egyptians and Assyrians, or the help of these people, before the Lord, the fountain of living waters, and his worship and powerful help. The Targum paraphrases this last clause thus,

“why do ye make covenant with the Assyrian, to carry you captive beyond the river Euphrates?”

Ver. 19. *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee*, etc.] That is, either their wickedness in going to Egypt and Assyria, and the ill success they had in so doing might be an instruction to them to act otherwise, and a correction of their sin and folly; or that their wickedness was a reason, and a very just one, why they were chastened and corrected of the Lord:

and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; or be the cause why they were reprov'd of God; or their ill success in turning their backs on him, and going to the creature for help, was a severe rebuke of their sin and madness. The Targum is,

“I have brought afflictions upon thee, and thou hast not refrained from thy wickedness; and, because thou art not turned to the law, vengeance is taken on thee.”

Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter; or observe and take notice what evil and bitter things sin, particularly the forsaking of the Lord and his worship, brings upon persons; for not sin itself is meant, though that is exceeding sinful, and is a root of bitterness, however sweet it may be to the taste of a sinner, and produces bitter effects; but the punishment of sin is meant, or corrections and reproofs for it; which are evil things, as calamities, and captivity, and the like; and which are very ungrateful and disagreeable to flesh and blood; and yet men, going on in a course of sin, and forsaking the Lord, as it follows, are the cause of these things:

that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God; (See Gill on “²⁰¹³Jeremiah 2:13”), this is the source of all the evil and bitterness experienced by them:

and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts; this was the reason of their forsaking the Lord, his ways and worship, because they had no reverence of him; his fear was not before their eyes, nor on their hearts; and both were the cause of evil coming upon them; so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“and know and see, for I have brought evil and bitterness upon thee, O Jerusalem, because thou hast forsaken the worship of the Lord thy God, and hast not put my fear before thine eyes, saith the Lord, the God of hosts.”

Ver. 20. *For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands*, etc.] The yoke of the people, as the Targum expresses it, that was upon their

necks, and the bands in which they were bound by them; referring to the deliverance of them of old from Egyptian bondage by the hands of Moses, and out of their several captivities among their neighbours by the means of the judges, and in their time; though the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “of old thou hast broken my yoke, and burst my bands”; or “thy yoke”, and “thy bands”, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the yoke of the law that the Lord put upon them, and the bands of statutes and ordinances which he enjoined them; but the former sense is best:

and thou saidst, I will not transgress; here is a double reading; the Cetib or writing is **dwb[a]**, “I will not serve”; which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, which so renders it; and by the Septuagint version, “I will not serve thee”; and which is the sense of the Arabic version, “I will not subject myself”, that is, to the law and will of God; and so the Syriac version, though to a quite different sense, “I will serve no other god any more”: which agrees with the Keri or reading, which is **rwb[a]**, “I will not transgress”; and this is confirmed by the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

“and ye said, we will not add any more to transgress thy word;”

and by Jarchi and Kimchi, who interpret it of transgressing the words and commands of God; both have one and the same sense. For whether it be read, “I will not serve”; the meaning is, as Kimchi observes, “I will not serve idols”; or no other god, as the Syriac version: or whether, “I will not transgress”; that is, the command of the Lord, by serving other gods. Hillerus^{f39} reconciles the writing and reading after this manner, rendering **dwb[a al]**, “I will not serve”, and **rwb[a al]**, “I will not pass”, to servitude; though, in another place^{f40} “I will not pass over”, that is, the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates with the captives; and refers to (^{3300B}Micah 1:11 ^{340D}Isaiah 47:2), but doubtless reference is had to the promise of obedience and service, which the Israelites made at Mount Sinai quickly after their deliverance out of Egypt, (^{029B}Exodus 19:8 24:7), but this promise they did not keep: “when”, or “for”, or “but”, or “although”^{f41},

upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wanderest, playing the harlot; that is, committing spiritual whoredom or idolatry with idols, set on high hills and mountains, and under green trees, groves, and shady places; going from one idol to another, as harlots go from one stew to another; or as whoremongers go from harlot to harlot.

Ver. 21. *Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed,* etc.] It is usual to compare the people of the Jews to a vineyard, and to vines; and their settlement in the land of Canaan to the planting of vines in a vineyard; (see ²¹¹¹Isaiah 5:1-7 ²¹⁵⁷Exodus 15:17 ⁴⁸⁰⁸Psalms 80:8-15). Kimchi says this is spoken concerning Abraham; no doubt respect is had to the Jewish fathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, and the like; who, having the true and right seed of grace in them, became like choice and noble vines, and brought forth much fruit, and were deserving of imitation by their posterity:

how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? like a vine that grows in the woods, and brings forth wild grapes; so these, their sons, degenerating in practice from their fathers, became corrupt in themselves, and unprofitable to God. The Targum of the whole is,

“I set you before me as the plant of a choice vine, all of you doing truth; but how are you changed before me in your corrupt works? ye have declined from my worship, ye are become as a vine in which there is no profit.”

Ver. 22. *For though thou wash thee with nitre,* etc.] The word **rtn**, “nitre”, is only used in this place and in (²¹⁵¹Proverbs 25:20) and it is hard to say what it is. Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that some say it is what is called “alum”; and others that it is a dust with which they wash the head, and cleanse everything; and so Jarchi says it is a kind of earth used in cleaning garments; and “nitre” is mentioned by the Misnic doctors^{f42} among those things which are used for the washing of garments, and taking spots out of them; though about what it is they are not agreed; and it seems the nitre of the ancients is unknown to us^{f43}; and saltpetre is put in the room of it; and some render the word here “saltpetre”; and Pliny^{f44} observes, that nitre does not much differ from salt, and ascribes to it a virtue of eating out filth, and removing it; so Aristotle^{f45} reports of the lake Ascania; that its water is of such a nitrous quality, that garments, being put into it, need no other washing. Nitre has its name from **rtn**, “to loose”, because it looses the filth, and cleanses from it:

and take thee much soap. The Septuagint render it, “herb”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “the herb borith”; which is the Hebrew word here used; and about the sense of which there is some difficulty. Kimchi and

Ben Melech say some take it to be the same with what is called “soap”; so Jarchi; and others, that it is an herb with which they wash, the same that is called fullers’ herb; but whether it is soap, or fullers’ herb, or fullers’ earth, as others, it is certain it is something fullers used in cleaning garments, as appear from (^{3RD}Malachi 3:2), where the same word is used, and fullers made mention of as using what is signified by it. It has its name from *hrb*, which signifies to “cleanse” and “purify”. The sense is, let this backsliding and degenerate people take what methods they will to cleanse themselves from their sins, as by their ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, which was the usual method they had recourse to, to purify themselves, and in which they rested:

yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God; or, “will retain its spots”,^{f46} these remain; the filth is not washed away; the iniquity is not hid and covered; it appears very plain and manifest;

yea, shines like gold; or, “is gilded”,^{f47}; as the word used signifies. It is of too deep a die to be removed by such external things; nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin, take away its filth, removes its guilt, and cover it out of the sight of God, so that it can be seen no more. The Targum is,

“for if you think to be cleansed from your sins, as they cleanse with nitre, or make white with “borith”, or soap; lo, as the mark of a spot which is not clean, so are your sins multiplied before me, saith the Lord God.”

Ver. 23. *How canst thou say, I am not polluted*, etc.] No man can say this; for all are defiled with sin; but this was the cast and complexion of these people in all ages; they were a generation of men that were pure in their own eyes, but were not cleansed from their filthiness; they fancied that their ceremonial washings and sacrifices cleansed them from moral impurities, when those only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; still their iniquity remained marked before the Lord; they acted the part of the adulterous woman in (^{3RD}Proverbs 30:20) to whom they are compared in the context; and, therefore, as wondering at their impudence, they having a whore’s forehead, this question is put, how and with what face they could affirm this, and what follows:

I have not gone after Baalim? or, “the Baalim”; the idols of the people, as the Targum interprets it; for there were many Baals, as Baalzephon, Baalpeor, Baalzebub, and others:

see thy way in the valley; where idols were set up and worshipped; or through which the way lay, as Kimchi observes, to the hills and mountains where idolatry was frequently committed; perhaps no particular valley is meant, but any in which idols were worshipped, or which they passed through to the worshipping of them; though the Targum interprets it of the valley in which they dwelt, over against Baalpeor, so Jarchi and Abarbinel, when they worshipped that idol; and seems to design the valley of Shittim, (^{0200}Numbers 25:1,2), but rather, if any particular valley is intended, the valley of Hinnom seems to bid fair for it; and to this it may be the Septuagint version has respect, rendering it *εν τω πολυανδριω*, “in the sepulchre of the multitude”; multitudes being burnt and buried here:

know what thou hast done; in the valley, especially in the valley of Hinnom, where they caused their children to pass through the fire to Molech:

thou art a swift dromedary. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it a young camel; and so the word in the Arabic language signifies; and the epithet “swift” better agrees with that than with the dromedary. Curtius^{f48} makes mention of dromedary camels of great swiftness; but it may be this is to be understood, not of its swiftness in running, but of its impetuous lust, as Calvin observes; and, indeed, each of these creatures are very libidinous; and therefore these people are compared to them; (see Gill on ^{3000}Micah 1:13”), it follows:

traversing her ways; running about here and there after the male, burning with lust, sometimes one way, and sometimes another; and so these people sometimes run after one idol, and sometimes another, and followed a multitude of them. The Targum renders it, “which corrupts or depraves her ways”. Deuteronomy Dieu observes, that the word *Ærcç*, in the Ethiopic language, signifies “the evening”; and so may intend walking in the evening, in the dark, rather than in the light; which, as it is the way of dromedaries, and almost of all beasts, so of harlots, to whom these people are likened; and he further observes, that, in the Arabic language, it signifies to make common, which agrees with adulterous persons, as these were in a spiritual sense. The word is only used in this place, and is deduced from, or has some relation to, the word *Æwrçç*, which signifies a

“shoelatchet”, (^{ⲑⲓⲛⲁⲓ}Genesis 14:23) as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; and may denote, as the shoe is bound and fastened with the latchet, the binding of her ways to her heart, as the former suggests, the strengthening and confirming of her in her evil ways, and her constant persisting therein; but the first sense of running here and there through lust is best; and is approved by Bynaeus^{f49} and by Buxtorf^{f50}.

Ver. 24. *A wild ass used to the wilderness*, etc.] That is, one that has been brought up in the wilderness, and has been accustomed to live, and run, and range about there; as men in general are compared to this creature for its ignorance, stupidity, folly, stubbornness, and unteachableness, (^{ⲑⲓⲛⲁⲓ}Job 11:12), so the Jewish people are represented as like unto it, for its wantonness and lust:

that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; draws it in at her nostrils, and snuffs it up; or opens her mouth, and takes it in with her breath; drinks it in, and swallows it up at her pleasure: or, “with the desire of her soul”^{f51}; it being grateful and delightful to her. Some read this clause in connection with *htnat*, rendered “in her occasion”; and differently translate it. The Targum takes it to have the signification of *μynt*, “dragons”; or whales; and renders it,

“drinking the wind as a dragon;”

and so Jarchi, who compares it with (^{ⲑⲓⲛⲁⲓ}Jeremiah 14:6) “they snuffed up the wind like dragons”; and so the Syriac version, “thou hast drawn up the wind like a wild dog”; others render it, “gathering the wind of her occasion”; or, “of her meeting”^{f52}; taking it in, and snuffing it up, as she occasionally met with it in running. The Vulgate Latin version is, “she drew the wind of her love”; it is reported of the wild ass, that it can smell its mate afar off, and, by the wind it snuffs, knows where it is; for which purpose it runs up the hills and mountains to get the scent, which, when it has, its lust is so violent that there is no stopping of it till it comes to the place where its mate is: wherefore it follows,

in her occasion who can turn her away? when this violent fit is upon her, there is no turning her away from pursuing the enjoyment of it; which is expressive of the eager desire of the Jews after the worshipping of idols, how bent upon it, and not to be reclaimed from it:

all they that seek her will not weary themselves; knowing that they can not overtake her, or stop her in her career, or hinder her gratification of her lust. This may be understood either of those who sought to commit spiritual adultery or idolatry with the Jews, they need not weary themselves, being easy to be found by them; or of the prophets that sought to reclaim them, who, perceiving how stubborn, and untractable, and irreclaimable they were, would not weary themselves with their admonitions and reproofs, seeing they were in vain:

in her month they shall find her; not that this creature sleeps one whole month in a year, as Jarchi dreams, when it may be easily taken; but the sense is, that when it is with young, and in the last month, and so is heavy with its burden, it may easily be found and taken; so when the people of Israel should have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the judgment of God was fallen and lay heavy upon them; then those that sought to return them from their evil ways might find them, and hope to succeed in reclaiming them, and bringing them to repentance; agreeably the Septuagint render it, “in her humiliation”; when chastised and humbled by the Lord for her sins. This is not to be understood of the month of Ab, in which Jerusalem was destroyed, both by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus; in which month the Jews are sure to be found confessing their sins, and humbling themselves, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech interpret it; nor of the new moon, as others; at everyone of which, those who sought to join with them in idolatrous practices might be sure to find them at them.

Ver. 25. *Withhold thy foot from being unshod*, etc.] That it may not be unshod, be naked and bare. The sense is, either, as some, do not take long journeys into foreign countries for help, as into Assyria and Egypt, whither they used to go barefoot; or wore out their shoes by their long journeys, and so returned without; or refrain from idolatry, as Jarchi interprets it, that thou mayest not go naked into captivity; or this is an euphemism, as others think, forbidding adulterous actions, showing the naked foot, the putting off of the shoes, in order to lie upon the bed, and prostitute herself to her lovers; and is to be understood of idolatry:

and thy throat from thirst; after wine, which excites lust; abstain from eager and burning lust after adulterous, that is, idolatrous practices; so the Targum,

“refrain thy feet from being joined with the people, and thy mouth from worshipping the idols of the people.”

The words are paraphrased in the Talmud^{f53} thus,

“withhold thyself from sinning, that thy foot may not become naked; (the gloss is, “when thou goest into captivity”) refrain thy tongue from idle words, that thy throat may not thirst:”

this was said by the Lord, or by the prophets of the Lord sent unto them, to which the following is an answer:

but thou saidst, there is no hope; of ever being prevailed upon to relinquish those idolatrous practices, or of being received into the favour of God after such provocations: no; I will never refrain from them; I will not be persuaded to leave them:

for I have loved strangers; the strange gods of the nations:

and after them will I go; and worship them; so the Targum,

“I love to be joined to the people, and after the Worship of their idols will I go.”

Ver. 26. *As the thief is ashamed when he is found*, etc.] Taken in the fact, or convicted of it; that is, as the Targum explains it, one that has been accounted faithful, and is found a thief; for, otherwise, those who have lost their character, and are notorious for their thefts and robberies, are not ashamed when they are found out, taken, and convicted:

so is the house of Israel ashamed: of their idolatry, or ought to be; or “shall be”, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; though not now, yet hereafter, sooner or later:

they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and their prophets; all being guilty; kings setting ill examples, and the people following them; the priests being priests of Baal, and the prophets false ones.

Ver. 27. *Saying to a stock*, etc.] “To a tree”^{f54}; to a piece of wood; that is, to an image made of it; so the Targum,

“they say to an image of wood;”

what follows:

thou art my father; ascribing that to the idol which belongs to God, who was their Father that made them, and upheld them, was the author of their beings, and the God of their mercies:

and to a stone; an image of stone:

thou hast brought me forth: into being; affirming it to be his former and maker; so the Targum,

“to that which is made of stone, thou hast created me:”

for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face; they turned their faces to images of wood and stone, and worshipped them; and they turned their backs upon the Lord, his worship and ordinances, and apostatized from him; which the Targum thus expresses,

“for they turned their backs on my worship, and did not put my fear before their faces:”

but in the time of their trouble; when any calamity befalls them, as famine, pestilence, sword, captivity, and the like:

they will say, arise, and save us; not that they will say so to their idols, but they will say so to the true God; for notwithstanding they worshipped idols in time of prosperity, forgetting God their Saviour; yet in adversity they are brought to their senses, and find that none but God can save them, and therefore apply to him; to which agrees the Targum,

“and in the time that evil comes upon them, they deny their idols, and confess before me, and say, have mercy on us, and save us.”

Ver. 28. *But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee?* etc.] This is, or would be, the Lord’s answer to them, what is become of your gods? why do not you apply to them for help in time of trouble? the gods that you have chosen for yourselves and worshipped; the gods, not that made you, but whom you yourselves have made:

let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; call upon them to arise, those statues of wood and stone, those lifeless and senseless images; let them rise off their seats, and move out of their places, if they can, and see whether they can save in a time of trouble and distress; for there is enough of them, if numbers will do:

for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; in imitation of the Heathens, who had not only in every country, but in every city and town, a different god, the patron and tutelar deity of the place; (see ^{<177>}2 Kings 17:29-31). The Septuagint and Arabic versions “add,

according to the number of the ways, or streets, of Jerusalem”, they sacrificed to Baal; (see ²⁴¹¹³Jeremiah 11:13).

Ver. 29. *Wherefore will ye plead with me?* etc.] Strive and contend, chide, murmur, and complain, when evil came upon them, as if the Lord dealt hardly with them, and as if they had never sinned against him; when their case would not bear to be brought into judgment and examined openly; what would they get by that but shame and disgrace?

ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord; high and low, rich and poor, great and small; men of all ranks, degrees, and character; kings, priests and prophets; and therefore ought not to contend with God, and charge him with injustice or unkindness, but themselves with folly and wickedness.

Ver. 30. *In vain have I smitten your children,* etc.] Or, “for vanity”,^{f55}; for vain speaking, for making vain oaths and vows; so it is explained in the Talmud^{f56}; but the sense is, that the rod of chastisement was used in vain; the afflictions that came upon them had no effect on them to amend and reform them; they were never the better for them:

they received no correction; or instruction by them; (see ²⁴¹¹³Jeremiah 5:3),

your own sword hath devoured your prophets; as Isaiah, Zechariah, and Uriah, who were sent to them to reprove and correct them, but they were so far from receiving their correction, that they put them to death; though Kimchi mentions it as the sense of his father, and which he approves of, that this is to be understood, not of the true prophets of the Lord, but of false prophets; wherefore it is said, “your prophets”; and they had no prophets but false prophets, whose prophecy was the cause of the destruction of souls, and this brought ruin upon the prophets themselves; and this sense of the words Jerom gives into; it follows:

like a destroying lion; that is, the sword of the Lord, according to the latter sense; the judgments of God, by which the people fall, and their false prophets with them, were like a lion that destroys and devours all that come near it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

and ye were not afraid; which confirms what was before said, that chastisement and correction were in vain.

Ver. 31. *O generation, see ye the word of the Lord,* etc.] Take notice of it, consider it; or, hear it, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Jarchi and Kimchi think^{f57} the pot of manna was brought out, and shown them, to be looked at by them, for the conviction of them, and confirmation of what follows:

have I been a wilderness unto Israel? no: the Israelites were plentifully supplied by him when in the wilderness, and since they were brought into a land flowing with milk and honey; so that they stood in need of nothing; they had a constant supply of all good things:

or a land of darkness? of misery, distress, and poverty; where no light of joy, comfort, and prosperity, is; a land that never sees the light, or enjoys the benefit of the sun, and so is barren and unfruitful; “a land of thorns”, as the Septuagint version; or, “a desert and uncultivated land”, as the Targum, and Syriac and Arabic versions. It may be rendered, “a land of the darkness of God”^{f58}; that is, of the greatest darkness, of thick and gross darkness, alluding to that in Egypt; as the flame of God, and mountains of God, (⁻²⁸⁸⁶Song of Solomon 8:6 ⁻¹⁸⁸⁶Psalm 36:6), as Ben Melech and Kimchi observe:

wherefore say my people, we are lords; and can reign without thee; or we have kings and princes, and have no need of thee, so Kimchi; but the word used seems to have another meaning, and to require another sense. The Targum is, “we are removed”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “we have gone back”; to which agrees the Jewish Midrash^{f59}, mentioned by Jarchi, and confirmed with a passage out of the Misna^{f60}, “we are separated from thee”; we have departed from thee, turned our backs on thee, have forsaken thee, and left thy ways and worship; and to do so was very ungrateful, when the Lord had so richly supplied them, that they had not lacked any good thing; and this sense agrees with what follows:

we will come no more unto thee? some render it, “we have determined”^{f61}; as having the same sense with the Arabic word, which signifies to “will” or determine anything; and then the meaning is, we are determined, we are resolved to come no more to thee, to attend thy worship and service any more; and so the Targum,

“we will not return any more to thy worship.”

Ver. 32. *Can a maid forget her ornaments,* etc.] Which she has provided for her wedding day, and is then to wear, and which may be the next; such

as ear rings, bracelets, and jewels, which are never out of her mind, and can scarce sleep for thinking of them, how richly she shall be adorned with them; wherefore it follows:

or a bride her attire? or, “her bindings”^{f62}; her knots about her head or breast. The word is rendered “head bands” in (^{אֲבָרֹתַי} Isaiah 3:20) and here, by the Septuagint version, “her stomacher”; set with sparkling precious stones; (see ^{אֲבָרֹתַי} Isaiah 61:10), these things her heart being set upon, and priding herself with, cannot be forgotten by her, at least not long:

yet, my people have forgotten me days without number; which shows great stupidity and ingratitude; the Lord not being so much to them, from whom they had received so many favours, as the ornaments of a maid, and the attire of a bride, are to them.

Ver. 33. *Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?* etc.] To seek the love, and gain the affections and esteem, of the idolatrous nations; as a lascivious woman dresses herself out in the best manner to excite the lust and move the affections of her lovers; and as Jezebel, who painted her face, and tired her head, (^{אֲבָרֹתַי} 2 Kings 9:30) or dressed it in the best manner, where the same word is used as here; so the Targum,

“why dost thou make thy way beautiful, to procure loves (or lovers) to be joined to the people?”

or the sense is, why art thou so diligent and industrious to make thy way, which is exceeding bad, look a good one, by sacrifices and ceremonies, oblations and ablutions, in order to seek and obtain my love and favour, which is all in vain? it is not to be gained by such methods:

therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways; the wicked idolatrous nations, to whom they joined themselves; these they taught their ways of sacrificing, their rites, ceremonies, and superstitions; or, as Jarchi interprets it, thou hast taught thyself the worst way among them all; that is, thou hast used thyself to it: there is a double reading in this clause. The Cetib, or writing, is **yt dml**, “I have taught”; as if they were the words of God, saying, “wherefore I have taught”; or, “will teach”; that is, by punishing thee;

that thy ways are evil; or, as Kimchi explains it,

“I have taught thee by thy ways that they are evil, and evil shall come unto thee because of them.”

The Keri, or reading, is **tdml** , “thou hast taught”; which is confirmed by the Targum; and is followed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions. It is by some rendered, “seeing thou hast taught others thy evil ways”^{f63}; not content to sin themselves, but taught others to do so, and yet would be thought good.

Ver. 34. *Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents*, etc.] Either of the innocent infants of poor persons, who were sacrificed to Moloch; or of the poor prophets of the Lord, whom they slew, because they faithfully reprov'd them for their sins; and the blood of those being found in their skirts is expressive of the publicness and notoriety of their sin, and also of the large quantity of blood shed, inasmuch as the skirts of their garments were filled with it, as if they had trod and walked in blood; (see ^{271B} Isaiah 63:3).

I have not found it by secret search; or, “by digging”^{f64}; there was no need to dig for it; it lay above ground; it was upon their skirts, public enough: or, “in ditches”, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin^{f65} versions; as when murders are privately and secretly committed; but these were done openly. Some read the words, “thou didst not find them with a digging instrument”^{f66}; so Jarchi interprets the words,

“you did not find them with a digging instrument, or in digging, when you slew them;”

you did not find them prepared as thieves to break up your houses, or digging down your walls, and breaking through into your houses, then you would have been justified by the law in slaying them, (^{127D} Exodus 22:2), but this was not the case:

but upon all these; upon all their skirts, and not in ditches, or under ground; or, “for all these”; thou hast so done; not for their sins, for theft, or any other; but for their faithful reproofs and rebukes; so Jarchi, for all these words with which they reprov'd thee; or for all these, the idols on whose account, in the worship of them, the blood of the innocents was shed.

Ver. 35. *Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent*, etc.] Or, “that I am innocent”; though guilty of such flagrant and notorious crimes, acting like

the adulterous woman, (^{אמ}Proverbs 30:20) to whom the Jews are all along compared in this chapter; which shows the hardness of their hearts, and their impudence in sinning:

surely his anger shall turn from me; the anger of God, since innocent; or, “let his anger be turned from me”, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; pleading for the removing of judgments upon the foot of innocency, which is pretended:

behold, I will plead with thee; enter into judgment with thee, and examine the case closely and thoroughly:

because thou sayest, I have not sinned; it would have been much better to have acknowledged sin, and pleaded for mercy, than to insist upon innocence, when the proof was so evident; nothing can be got by entering into judgment with God, upon such a foundation; and to sin, and deny it, is an aggravation of it: the denial of sin is a double sin, as the wise man says, whom Kimchi cites.

Ver. 36. *Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?* etc.] Or, “by changing thy way”^{if67}; sometimes going one way, and sometimes another; sometimes to Egypt, and then to Assyria; seeking sometimes to the one for help, and sometimes to the other; at one time serving the gods of the one, in order to curry favour with them, and then the gods of the other, like a lascivious woman that gads about from place to place to increase her lovers, and satisfy her lust. The Vulgate Latin version is, “how exceeding vile art thou become, changing thy ways”; and so Jarchi says, the word **yl zt** signifies “contempt”, or “vileness”: deriving it from **l wz**, or **l l z**, to be “vile” or “contemptible”; and to this sense are the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but Kimchi derives it from **l za**, to go; to which our version and others agree:

thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt; as they were in the times of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, when Pharaohnecho king of Egypt took the former, and put him in bands, and carried him into Egypt; and set the latter upon the throne, and took tribute of him, for which the land was taxed, (^{אמ}2 Kings 23:33-35)

as thou wast ashamed of Assyria; in the times of Ahaz, who sent to the king of Assyria for help, when Judah was smitten by the Edomites, and

invaded by the Philistines; but when he came to him, he distressed him, and strengthened and helped him not, (~~44316~~2 Chronicles 28:16-21).

Ver. 37. *Yea, thou shalt go forth from him*, etc.] From the Egyptian, without any help, and with shame; or, “from this”^{f68}; that is, from this place, from Jerusalem, and from the land of Judea, into captivity; notwithstanding all the promised and expected help from Egypt, (~~12407~~2 Kings 24:7,10):

and thine hands upon thine head; plucking and disheveling the hair, as women in distress; so Tamar, when abused by her brother, laid her hand on her head, and went out crying, (~~10139~~2 Samuel 13:19):

for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences; those in whom they trusted, as the Egyptians; so that they should be of no service to them; or them, because of their trust and confidence in men, when it ought to have been placed above in himself:

and thou shalt not prosper in them; or because of them, as Kimchi; but shalt go into captivity.