

A second stanza of this section begins with verse 13, and verse 17 ends with the words: "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

Verse 18 begins a new stanza, and the last verse of the chapter (verse 21) ends with the words: "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." It is strange that the archbishop should have failed to see that the passage from 9:8 to 10:4 is one connected poem with four stanzas each ending with the same refrain. This makes it clear that the chapter divisions should have been put at the end of 9:7 and of 10:4, rather than where the archbishop placed them.

Isaiah 10:5 begins a new subject: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." This section discusses the mighty Assyrian empire which was such a great threat to Israel and Judah, and which eventually destroyed the northern kingdom. The chapter ends with the declaration that God will bring this great empire to an end. It speaks of it under the figure of the great forest of Lebanon. Verses 33-34 read: "Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."

Thus Isaiah declares that God will destroy this great brutal force that has caused so much violence and trouble. To understand Isaiah 11 one should note how chapter 10 leads up to it, and see the contrast. Here is the Assyrian empire typified by the great forest of Lebanon, which God declares that He will utterly destroy. This was literally fulfilled. For centuries it was not even known where the great Assyrian capital city had been, until the ruins of Nineveh were discovered about 130 years ago.