

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH

This book is called, in the New Testament, sometimes “the Book of the Words of the Prophet Esaias”, (~~<4004>~~ Luke 3:4) sometimes only the “Prophet Esaias”, (~~<4008>~~ Acts 8:28,30) and sometimes, as here, the “Book of the Prophet Esaias”, (~~<4017>~~ Luke 4:17). In the Syriac version the title is, “the Prophecy of Isaiah the Son of Amos”: and in the Arabic version, “the Beginning of the Prophecy of Isaiah the Prophet”. It stands first of all the prophets; though the order of the prophets, according to the Jews^{f1}, is, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve. But it is here placed first, not because Isaiah prophesied before the other prophets; for Joel, Jonah, Hosea, and Amos, begun before him, namely, in or before the days of Jeroboam the Second; but because of the excellency of the matter contained in it. Isaiah is called by Ben Syra^{f2} the great prophet, and by Eusebius^{f3} the greatest of the prophets; and Jerom^{f4} says, he should rather be called an evangelist than a prophet, since he seems rather to write a history of things past, than to prophesy of things to come; yea, he styles him an apostle, as well as an evangelist^{f5}: and certain it is that no one writes so fully and clearly of the person, offices, grace, and kingdom of Christ; of his incarnation and birth of a virgin; of his sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow, as he does. John, the forerunner of Christ, began his ministry with a passage out of him concerning himself, (~~<4008>~~ Matthew 3:3 ~~<4008>~~ Mark 1:3 ~~<4004>~~ Luke 3:4 ~~<4013>~~ John 1:23). Our Lord preached his first sermon at Nazareth out of this book, (~~<4017>~~ Luke 4:17-21) and it was in this the eunuch was reading when Philip came up to him, who from the same Scripture preached to him Christ, (~~<4008>~~ Acts 8:28-35). And there are more citations in the New Testament made out of this prophecy than any other book, excepting the book of Psalms, as Musculus observes. To which may be added, as another reason, the elegance and sublimity of his style in which he exceeds the greatest of orators, Demosthenes among the Greeks, and Tully among the Romans; and this is observed both by Jews and Christians. Abarbinel^{f6} says, that the purity, and elegance of his diction is like that of kings and counsellors, who speak more purely and elegantly than other men: hence their Rabbins, he says, compare Isaiah to a citizen, and Ezekiel to a countryman. And Jerom^{f7} observes, that Isaiah is so eloquent and polite, that there is nothing of rusticity in his language; and that his style is so florid, that a translation cannot preserve it. Moreover,

another reason of this book being placed first may be the bulk of it; it being larger, and containing more chapters, than any of the greater prophets, and almost as many as all the lesser prophets put together. That Isaiah was the writer of this book is not to be questioned; many of the prophecies in it are by name ascribed to him, (~~4134~~ Matthew 13:14 15:7 ~~4129~~ John 12:39) (~~4100~~ Romans 10:20,21) though some others might be the compilers of it, collect his prophecies, and digest them in order: so the Jews say^{f8}, that Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah, &c. At what time, and in whose days he prophesied, may be learnt from (~~2001~~ Isaiah 1:1) by which it appears that he prophesied long, and lived to a good old age. He began to prophesy about A. M. 3236, and about seven hundred and seventy years before Christ. Abulpharagius, an Arabic writer, says^{f9}, he lived an hundred and twenty years, eighty five of which he prophesied. It is a generally received tradition with the Jews, that he lived to the time of Manasseh, and that he was sawn asunder by him; and which has been embraced by the ancient Christian writers, and is thought to be referred to in (He 11:37). (See Gill on “He 11:37”). But Aben Ezra on (~~2001~~ Isaiah 1:1) observes, that had he lived to the time of Manasseh, it would have been written, and is of opinion that he died in Hezekiah’s time. According to the Cippi Hebraici^{f10}, he was buried at Tekoah, over whose grave a beautiful monument was erected; though Epiphanius^{f11}, or the author of the Lives of the Prophets that go by his name, says he was buried under the oak of Rogel, near the fountain of Siloam; and it is a tradition with the Syriac writers, that his body lay hid in the waters of Siloah; (see Gill on “~~4100~~ John 5:4”) but these are things not to be depended on; and alike fabulous are all other writings ascribed to him, besides this prophecy; as what are called the ascension of Isaiah, the vision of Isaiah, and the conference of Isaiah. This book contains some things historical, but chiefly prophetic; of which some relate to the punishment of the Jews, and other nations; but for the most part are evangelical, and concern the kingdom and grace of Christ; of which some are delivered out more clearly and perspicuously, and others more obscurely, under the type of the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 1

This chapter, after the inscription, contains a charge of aggravated sin against the Jews; God's rejection of their ceremonial sacrifices and service; an exhortation to repentance and obedience, with a promise of pardon; a restoration from their sad estate; a prophecy of their restoration to a better; and of the destruction of idolatrous sinners. The inscription is in (^{2300B}Isaiah 1:1) in which are the title of the prophecy, a vision; the writer of it described by his name, his descent, and the times in which he prophesied; and the subject of the prophecy is Judah and Jerusalem. The charge against the Jews is rebellion against the Lord, and the heavens and earth are called as witnesses of it; which is aggravated by the relation they stood in to God, and by the favours bestowed upon them, (^{2300C}Isaiah 1:2) by their more than brutish stupidity, (^{2300D}Isaiah 1:3) by the multitude of their sins, which were of a provoking nature, (^{2300E}Isaiah 1:4) by the uselessness of chastisements, the whole body of the people, from the highest to the lowest, being afflicted without being the better for it, and so generally depraved, that no regard was had to any means of reformation, (^{2300F}Isaiah 1:5,6) and by the desolation it brought upon them, which is illustrated by several similes, (^{2300G}Isaiah 1:7,8) and by the grace and goodness of God in reserving a few, or otherwise they must have been for their punishment, as they were for their sins, like Sodom and Gomorrah, (^{2300H}Isaiah 1:9) wherefore both rulers and people are called upon under those names to hearken to the law of God, and not trust in and depend upon their sacrifices and other rites of the ceremonial law, together with their hypocritical prayers; all which were abominable to the Lord, since they were guilty of such dreadful immoralities, (^{2300I}Isaiah 1:11-15) when they are exhorted to repentance for sin, to the obedience of faith, and washing in the blood of Christ, whereby their crimson and scarlet sins would become as white as wool and snow, otherwise destruction must be expected, (^{2300J}Isaiah 1:16-20) and then a lamentation is taken up concerning the deplorable state of Jerusalem, representing the difference between what it was now, and what it was formerly, and the sad degeneracy of the people, rulers, and judges, (^{2300K}Isaiah 1:21-23) upon which the Lord foretells what he thought to do:

to avenge himself of his enemies; to purge his church and people; to restore them to their former uprightness and integrity; and to redeem them with judgment and righteousness, (^{2012b}Isaiah 1:24-27) and the chapter is concluded with a denunciation of utter destruction upon wicked men, who are described and pointed at as idolaters; which will cover them with shame and confusion, (^{2012b}Isaiah 1:28,29) and which is illustrated by the fading of the leaves of an oak, and by a garden parched with drought, (²⁰¹³Isaiah 1:30) and it is suggested that it will be by burning with fire unquenchable, (²⁰¹³Isaiah 1:31).

Ver. 1. *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, &c.*] This is either the particular title of the prophecy contained in this single chapter, as Jarchi and Abarbanel think; seeing the second chapter (^{230b}Isaiah 2:1) begins with another title, “the word that Isaiah saw”, &c. or rather it is the common title of the whole book; since it is the vision which Isaiah saw in the reign of four kings, as is later affirmed; and so is no other than in general “the prophecy of Isaiah”, as the Targum renders it; called a “vision”, because it was delivered to him, at least the greatest part of it, in a vision; and because he had a clear perception of the things he prophesied of, as well as delivered them in a clear and perspicuous manner to others: hence the Jews say^{f12}, that Moses and Isaiah excelled the other prophets, seeing they understood what they prophesied of. The name of Isaiah, the penman of this book, signifies either “the Lord shall save”, according to Hilleras^{f13}; or “the salvation of the Lord”, as Abarbanel, Jerom, and others; and is very suitable to the message he was sent with to the people of God; to acquaint them that the Lord had provided a Saviour for them, and that he would come and save them. He is said to be “the son of Amoz”; not of Amos the prophet; the names differ; the name of the prophet that stands among the twelve lesser prophets is **swm** [“Amos”; the name of Isaiah’s parent is **wna**, “Amoz”. It is a tradition with the Jews^{f14}, that Amoz, the father of Isaiah, was brother to Amaziah, king of Judah, so that Isaiah was of the royal family. Abarbinei endeavours to confirm it from that greatness of mind, freedom and boldness, he used in reproofs, and from his polite and courtly way of speaking; and this is mentioned by Aben Ezra as a reason why the Jews did not harm him, as they did Jeremiah: but this tradition is not equally regarded by the Jewish writers; and though Kimchi takes notice of it, yet he says the genealogy of Isaiah is not known, nor of what tribe he was. If he was of the seed royal, this is an instance of God’s calling some that are noble, not only by his grace, but to office in his church; and it is

with a view to this tradition, no doubt, that Jerom^{f15} calls him “vir nobilis”, a “nobleman”. It is also a rule with the Jews^{f16}, that where the name of a prophet’s father is mentioned, it is a sign that his father was a prophet; and so they say this Amoz was, though the king’s brother; and that he is the same with the man of God that came to Amaziah^{f17}, (~~407~~ 2 Chronicles 25:7) but Aben Ezra suggests, that this rule does not always hold good.

Which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; that is, chiefly and principally; for though Ephraim, or the ten tribes of Israel, are mentioned, yet very rarely; and though there are prophecies concerning other nations in it, yet these relate to the deliverance of the Jews from them, or to God’s vengeance on them for their sake. Judah is put for the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and is particularly mentioned, because the Messiah, so much spoken of in this book, was to spring from thence, whose title is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and though Jerusalem was in it, yet that is also particularly taken notice of, because not only the temple, the place of divine worship, was in it, and it was the metropolis of the land; but because the Messiah, when he came, was often to appear here, and from thence the Gospel was to go forth into all the world; and this was a figure of the Gospel church state to the end of the world, which often bears this name: and many things are said in this prophecy not only concerning the coming of Christ, but of the Gospel dispensation, and of various things that should come to pass in it; concerning the glory of the church in the latter day, the calling of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, and the new heavens and new earth.

In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah: if Isaiah began to prophesy in the first year of Uzziah’s reign, as Kimchi and Abarbinel think, relying pretty much on (~~402~~ 2 Chronicles 26:22) and lived out the reign of Hezekiah, as he must, if he was put to death by Manasseh, according to the tradition of the Jews, he must prophesy a hundred and twelve or thirteen years; for Uzziah reigned fifty two years, Jotham sixteen, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah twenty nine; but as this seems to begin his prophecy too soon, since so small a part of it was in or concerns Uzziah’s reign; so it seems too late to fix the date of his prophecy from the year that King Uzziah died, when he had the vision in (~~210~~ Isaiah 6:1-13) and desired to be sent of the Lord; which is the opinion of Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others; but Dr. Lightfoot’s opinion is more probable, who places the beginning of his prophecy in the twenty third year of Uzziah; though perhaps it may be sufficient to allow him only ten years of Uzziah’s reign:

and as he lived through the two reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, so it is certain that he lived through more than half of the reign of Hezekiah; his whole reign was twenty nine years; and therefore it was when he had reigned fourteen years that he was taken sick, and then fifteen years more were added to his days; and the year after this came the messengers from Babylon to congratulate him on his recovery; all which Isaiah gives an account of (²³⁰⁰Isaiah 38:1-39:8) but how long he lived and prophesied after this cannot be said: had his days been prolonged to the times of Manasseh, it would have been written, as Aben Ezra observes, and who pays but little regard to the tradition of the Jews concerning Isaiah's being put to death by Manasseh; if the thing, says he, is "cabala", a tradition, it is truth; but he seems to call in question its reality; however, it is not to be depended on.

Ver. 2. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,* &c.] To what the Lord was about to say of his controversy with his people, which was to be managed openly and publicly before them as spectators and witnesses; this designs either strictly and properly the heavens and the earth, or figuratively the inhabitants of them, angels and men. The address is solemn, and denotes something of moment and importance to be done and attended to: (see ⁶⁵⁰Deuteronomy 32:1). The Targum is,

"hear, O ye heavens, that were moved when I gave my law to my people; and hearken, O earth, that trembleth before my word."

For the Lord hath spoken: not only by Moses, and the prophets that were before Isaiah, but he had spoken to him the words he was now about to deliver; for they were not his own words, but the Lord's: he spoke by the inspiration of God, and as moved by the Holy Ghost; and therefore what he said was to be received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God:

I have nourished and brought up children; meaning the Jews;

"my people, the house of Israel, whom I have called children,"

as the Targum paraphrases it; (see ¹⁰⁰²Exodus 4:22) to these, as a nation, belonged the adoption; they were reckoned the children of God; the Lord took notice and care of them in their infant state, brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, and fed them in it; brought them into Canaan's land, drove out the nations before them, and settled them there; gave them his laws and ordinances, distinguished them from all other nations by his favours, and raised them to a high estate, to much greatness

and prosperity, especially in the days of David and Solomon. The words may be rendered, “I have magnified”, or “made great, and have exalted children”^{f18}; not only brought them up, but brought them to great honour and dignity; and even unto man’s estate, unto the time appointed of the Father, when they should have been under tutors and governors no longer, but under the King Messiah; but they were rebellious, as follows:

and they have rebelled against me, their Lord and King; for the Jews were under a theocracy; God, who was their Father, was their King, and they rebelled against him by breaking his laws, which rebellion is aggravated by its being not only of subjects against their king, but of children against their father; the law concerning a rebellious son, see in (~~f18~~ Deuteronomy 21:18). The Targum paraphrases it, “they have rebelled against my Word”; the essential Word, the Messiah; the Septuagint version is, “but they have rejected me”^{f19}; and the Vulgate Latin version^{f20}, “but they have despised me”: so the Jews rejected and despised the true Messiah when he came, would not have him to reign over them, would not receive his yoke, though easy, but rebelled against him. The Jews were a rebellious people from the beginning, in Moses’s time, and in the prophets, and so quite down to the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 3. *The ox knoweth his owner*, &c.] Knows his voice, when he calls him, and follows him where he leads him, whether to plough in the field, or feed in the meadows;

and the ass his masters crib, or “manger”; where he is fed, and to which he goes when he wants food, and at the usual times. Gussetius^{f21} interprets the words; the ass knows the floor where he treads out the corn, and willingly goes to it, though it is to labour, as well as to eat; and so puts Israel to shame, who were weary of the worship of God in the temple, where spiritual food was provided for them, but chose not to go for it, because of labour there.

[*But*] *Israel doth not know*; his Maker and Owner, his King, Lord, and Master, his Father, Saviour, and Redeemer; he does not own and acknowledge him, but rejects him; (see ~~f10~~ John 1:10,11).

My people doth not consider; the Jews, who were the people of God by profession, did not stir themselves up to consider, nor make use of means of knowing and understanding, divine and spiritual things, as the word used^{f22} signifies; they would not attend to the word and ordinances, which

answer to the crib or manger; they would not hear nor regard the ministry of the word by Christ and his apostles, nor suffer others, but hindered them as much as in them lay; (see ^{<4133>}Matthew 23:13,37) (^{<4135>}Acts 13:45,46). The Targum is,

“Israel does not learn to know my fear, my people do not understand to turn to my law.”

In like manner the more than brutal stupidity of this people is exposed in (^{<2187>}Jeremiah 8:7).

Ver. 4. *Ah sinful nation*, &c.]. Or “sinning nation”^{f23}; that was continually sinning, doing nothing else but sin, the reverse of what they were chosen to be, (^{<1006>}Deuteronomy 7:6). These words are said, either as calling and crying to them, to cause them to hear and hearken to what is said, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, and as *ywh* is used in (^{<2501>}Isaiah 55:1 ^{<3016>}Zechariah 2:6,7) or by way of complaint and lamentation, as Jarchi thinks, because of their general and continued wickedness, (see ^{<1130>}1 Kings 13:30), or by way of threatening, as in (^{<2024>}Isaiah 1:24) and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“woe to them who are called a holy people, and have sinned:”

and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, “woe to the sinning nation”; their ruin is at hand:

a people laden with iniquity; full of sin; they multiplied offences, as in the Chaldee paraphrase: they were “heavy” with them, as the word^{f24} signifies, yet felt not, nor complained of, the burden of them:

a seed of evil doers; this is not said of their fathers, but of themselves, as Jarchi observes; they had been planted a right seed, but now were degenerate, a wicked generation of men.

Children that are corrupters; of themselves and others, by their words and actions; who had corrupted their ways, as the Targum adds; and so Kimchi and Aben Ezra.

They have forsaken the Lord; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it; the ways and ordinances of God, forsook the assembling of themselves together, neglected the hearing of the word, and attendance on the worship of the Lord’s house:

they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; by their numerous sins, both of omission and commission:

they are gone away backward; were become backsliders and revolters, had apostatized from God and his worship, turned their backs on him, and cast his law behind them. The characters here given not only agree with the Jews in the times of Isaiah, but also with those in the times of Christ and his apostles, (⁴¹²³Matthew 12:39 23:33).

Ver. 5. *Why should ye be stricken any more?* &c.] Or “for what are ye stricken again”^{f25}? with afflictions and chastisements, with which God smites his people by way of correction for their sins, (²⁵⁷¹Isaiah 57:17 ³⁸¹Hosea 6:1) and the sense is, either that they did not consider what they were afflicted for, that it was for their sins and transgressions; they thought they came by chance, or imputed them to second causes, and so went on in sin, and added sin to sin; to which sense the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, incline: or the meaning is, that the chastisements that were laid upon them were to no purpose; had produced no good effect, were of no avail, and unprofitable to them; and which is mentioned as an aggravation of their sins, obstinacy, and impenitence; (see ²⁴⁸³Jeremiah 5:3).

Ye will revolt more and more, or “add defection”^{f26}; go on in sin, and apostatize more and more, and grow more obdurate and resolute in it; unless afflictions are sanctified, men become more hardened by them:

the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; which may be understood either of their chastisements, which were universal, and had reached all sorts and ranks of men among them, without any reformation, and therefore it was in vain to use more; or of their sins and transgressions which abounded among them, even among the principal of them; their civil rulers and governors, meant by the “head”; and the priests, who should feed the people with knowledge and understanding, designed by the “heart”; but both were corrupted, and in a bad condition.

Ver. 6. *From the sole of the foot even unto the head [there is] no soundness in it*, &c.] Every member of the body politic was afflicted in one way or another, or sadly infected with the disease of sin; (see ⁴²⁸³Psalms 28:3). So the Targum,

“from the rest of the people, even unto the princes, there is none among them who is perfect in my fear;”

(see ²⁰⁹⁸Daniel 9:8 ²⁴⁸⁰Jeremiah 8:10)

[but] wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; to which either public calamities on a city or nation may be compared, (²⁸⁵³Hosea 5:13) or the sins and transgressions both of single persons, and of whole bodies of men, (²⁸⁸⁵Psalms 38:5,7). The Targum is,

“they are all stubborn and rebellious, they are defiled with sins as an ulcerous plaster.”

They have not been closed; that is, the wounds and sores have not been healed; or “they have not been pressed” or “squeezed”^{f27}, in order to get the purulent matter out of them:

neither bound up; with bands, after the matter is squeezed out, and a plaster laid on:

neither mollified with ointment; which is used for the supplying and healing of wounds; (see ²¹⁰⁴Luke 10:34). The sense either is, that they were not reformed by their afflictions; or that they did not repent of their sins, nor seek to God for healing and pardon, nor make use of any means for their more healthful state and condition. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

“they do not leave their haughtinesses, nor are they desirous of repentance, nor have they any righteousness to protect them.”

Ver. 7. *Your country [is] desolate, &c.]* Or “shall be”; this is either a declaration in proper terms of what is before figuratively expressed, or rather a prophecy of what would be their case on account of transgressions; and which had its accomplishment partly in the Babylonish captivity, and fully in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; when not only their city and temple, called their house, (⁴²³⁸Matthew 23:38), were left unto them desolate, but the whole land; and they were carried captive, and scattered among the nations, where they have been ever since:

your cities [are], or shall be,

burned with fire; as, Jerusalem has been, and other cities in Judea, (⁴²²⁷Matthew 22:7)

your land, strangers devour it in your presence; before their eyes, and it would not be in their power to prevent it; meaning either the Babylonians

or the Romans, or both, and especially the latter, who were strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel:

and [it is] desolate, as overthrown by strangers; who ravage, plunder, and destroy all they meet with, and spare nothing, not intending to settle there, as those who are near do, when they conquer a neighbouring nation. Some think this prophecy was delivered in the times of Ahaz, and refers to the desolation in his time, (^{<4287>}2 Chronicles 28:17-19) but rather, as Joel and Amos prophesied before Isaiah, he may refer to those desolating judgments, they speak of, by the locusts, caterpillars, and fire, (^{<2004>}Joel 1:4,10-12,17-20 ^{<3016>}Amos 4:6,11) but to consider the words as a prediction of what should be in after times seems best; and so the Arabic version reads the words, “your land shall be desolate, your cities shall be burnt with fire, and your country strangers shall devour before you”; or shall be as overthrown by strangers, being overflown with a flood or storm of rain; so Abendana^{f28}.

Ver. 8. *And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in the vineyard, &c.]* The Targum is,

“after they have got in the vintage.”

A cottage in the vineyard was a booth, as the word^{f29} signifies, which was erected in the middle of the vineyard for the keeper of the vineyard to watch in night and day, that the fruit might not be hurt by birds, or stolen by thieves, and was a very, lonely place; and when the clusters of the vine were gathered, this cottage or booth was left by the keeper himself: and such it is suggested Jerusalem should be, not only stand alone, the cities all around being destroyed by the besiegers, but empty of inhabitants itself, when taken.

As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers: the Targum adds here also,

“after they have gathered them out of it.”

A lodge in a garden of cucumbers was built up for the gardener to watch in at night, that nobody came and stole away the cucumbers, and this was also a lonely place; but when the cucumbers were gathered, the gardener left his lodge entirely; and such a forsaken place would Jerusalem be at the time of its destruction; (see ^{<2093>}Luke 19:43,44)

as a besieged city; which is in great distress, and none care to come near it, and as many as can make their escape out of it; or “as a city kept”; so Gussetius^{f30}, who understands this, and all the above clauses, of some places preserved from the sword in the common desolation.

Ver. 9. *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant,* &c.] This is an instance of the super abounding goodness of the Lord of hosts, as the Targum expresses it; that he should, in those very wicked and calamitous times, leave and reserve a few from being defiled with the sins of the age, and from being involved in the general calamity of it; which was true of the Christian Jews at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction; for that this prophecy belongs to these times is clear from the application of it by the Apostle Paul, (^{<B12>}Romans 9:29) and which confirms the sense given of the above passages: “the very small remnant” are the remnant according to the election of grace, the little flock, the few that entered in at the strait gate and are saved, or the few that believed in Christ, and so were saved from that untoward generation; these were “left”, reserved, distinguished, and secured in the grace of election, being a remnant according to it, in the hands of Christ to whom they were given, and in whom they were preserved; in redemption by him, that they might be a peculiar people; in providence till called, in which the Lord watched over them to do them good, and waited to be gracious to them, and saved them to be called; and in effectual calling, in which he separated them from the rest of the world, and kept them by his power through faith unto salvation. And this was done “unto us”; for the sake of his church, that that might continue, and he might have a seed to serve him: and by “the Lord of hosts”, of the hosts of heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars, and of the angels there, and of the inhabitants of the earth; which shows great condescension in him to regard this remnant, and great grace to them; since he could not stand in need of them, having the host of heaven on his right hand and on his left; nor was there any thing in them that could deserve this of him; but it was, as Jarchi observes, in his mercy, and not for their righteousness: to which may be added, that since he is the Lord of hosts, he was able to protect and preserve this remnant, notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils, as he did; and had he not taken such a method as this,

we should have been as Sodom, [and] we should have been like unto Gomorrah: cities that were infamous for their sins, and notorious for the punishment of them, being consumed by fire from heaven, (^{<B13>}Genesis 13:13 18:20 19:24) and not only the Jews, but any and every nation, even

the whole world, would have been like these cities, both for sin and punishment, had it not been for the distinguishing grace of God, in leaving and reserving a few for his glory, and the support of his interest. All the holiness that ever was, is, or will be in the world, is owing to electing, redeeming, and efficacious grace: there had not been a holy man nor a holy woman in the world, in any age, if God had not taken such methods of grace; and it is owing to, and for the sake of, this small remnant, that temporal judgments are often averted from a nation and people, and that the conflagration of the world is not yet; this is kept back till they are gathered in; and were it not for this distinguishing grace, every individual of mankind would have been cast into hell, and must have suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, which the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, was an example of.

Ver. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom,* &c.] Not literally, but mystically, meaning the governors of Judea; they and their people having sinned in like manner, and as openly, as the rulers of Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof; (see ^{<31B>}Isaiah 3:9) and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“receive the word of the Lord, ye governors, whose works are evil like the governors of Sodom.”

These are called to attend to the word of the Lord; either the Scriptures, which should be the rule of faith and practice, from which they had swerved; or to the word which now came to them by the prophet, and is contained in the following verses; or rather to the Gospel preached to them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, (see ^{<31B>}Isaiah 2:3) which being rejected by them as it was, it is declared that it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for them, (^{<41B>}Matthew 11:24)

give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah; the inhabitants of Judea; for as were both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, so were the people both in Isaiah’s time, and in the times of Christ and his apostles. The Targum is,

“hearken to the law of our God, ye people whose works are like to the people of Gomorrah.”

And by “the law of our God” is meant, not so much the law of Moses, which these people had not hearkened to, but had broken it, and cast it

away from them, as the doctrine of the grace of God, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our God; which was first sent and preached to this wicked people, for the sake of the small remnant, according to the election of grace left among them; (see ^{<2018>}Isaiah 2:3).

Ver. 11. *To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord, &c.*] These people, though they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and the more substantial duties of religion, as did the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, (^{<4023>}Matthew 23:23) yet were very diligent in the observance of the ceremonial law, and repeated their sacrifices almost without number, on which they placed all their trust and dependence; wherefore, to take off their confidence in these things, the Lord observes to them the unprofitableness of them; they could be of no avail to them, for they could not expiate their sins, or atone for them; and they could not be profitable to God, for he had no need of them; (see ^{<4800>}Psalms 50:10-12).

I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; to the loathing of them, and therefore would no more eat their flesh, and drink their blood, or accept of them in sacrifice, (^{<4803>}Psalms 50:13) "rams" were used for burnt offerings, (^{<0208>}Exodus 29:18) (^{<4010>}Leviticus 1:10) and the fat of any creature offered in sacrifice was burnt, and forbidden to be eaten by men, (^{<4008>}Leviticus 1:8,12 3:4,5,10,11) (^{<4015>}Leviticus 1:15,16 4:8-10,19,31,35 7:25,31)

and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats: as he did in moral services, in acts of beneficence and mercy, and in sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, (^{<0152>}1 Samuel 15:22) (^{<2016>}Hosea 6:6 ^{<4980>}Psalms 69:30,31) much less did he delight in the sacrifices of these creatures, as offered by such wicked hands and without faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and still less when these were superseded and abrogated by Christ; for this prophecy belongs to the times of the apostles, as appears from (^{<2009>}Isaiah 1:9) (see ^{<4016>}Psalms 40:6,7). The several creatures mentioned were used in sacrifice, and their blood was sprinkled round about the altar, (^{<4012>}Leviticus 3:2,8,13) and before the vail, (^{<4016>}Leviticus 4:6,17).

Ver. 12. *When ye come to appear before me, &c.*] At the grand festivals of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at which times all the males in Israel appeared before God, (^{<0237>}Exodus 23:17)

who hath required this at your hand; either to appear at such times, these feasts being no more to be observed; or to offer the above sacrifices; these were not required of the Israelites when they first came out of Egypt, (^{<3172>}Jeremiah 7:22) nor were they necessary to appear before God with, or to introduce them to the throne of his grace, (^{<3166>}Micah 6:6,7) and much less under the Gospel dispensation, being abolished by the sacrifice of Christ; or this relates to what follows,

to tread my courts? in that unbecoming and hypocritical way they did, and with such wicked hearts and bloody hands. “Courts” are mentioned, because, as Kimchi observes, the Israelites stood in the courts of the Lord’s house, and did not go into the temple, only the priests.

Ver. 13. *Bring no more vain oblations*, &c.] As all such were, which were offered up without faith in Christ, in hypocrisy, and with dependence on them for pardon and atonement, and particularly when put an end to by the sacrifice of Christ; (see ^{<4199>}Matthew 15:9). The Targum renders it, “an oblation of robbery”; (see ^{<2818>}Isaiah 60:8)

incense is an abomination to me; instead of being of a sweet smell. This was burnt on the altar of incense, and put upon the sacrifices, (^{<0206>}Exodus 30:1,7,8 ^{<0811>}Leviticus 2:1) was typical of prayer, (^{<3510>}Psalms 141:2 ^{<4183>}Revelation 8:3) but now under the Gospel dispensation to be disused, and so disagreeable to God, that it is as if an idol was blessed, (^{<2818>}Isaiah 66:3)

the new moons; the feasts kept on the first day of the month, at the appearance of the moon:

and sabbaths; observed every seventh day, every seventh year, and every seven times seventh year:

the calling of assemblies; or “the new moon and sabbath, do not call a congregation”. These assemblies called were the holy convocations on the seventh day sabbath, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at the blowing of the trumpets, and on the day of atonement, (^{<0213>}Leviticus 23:3) &c. (^{<0435>}Numbers 28:26 29:1,7,12). The words,

I cannot away with or “bear”, may be joined with the following word, “iniquity”; and the meaning is, that the Lord could not bear the iniquity that was in their hearts when they had their solemn assemblies and holy convocations:

[it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting: or cessation from work on any of the above festivals; particularly the feast of weeks, or pentecost, was called *trx*[], “Atzareth”, by the Jews^{f31}, the same word with this here^{f32}.

“Do not go on to offer oblation of vanity; incense of abomination is it to me; [do not go on, I say], on the new moon, and sabbath, to call a convocation: I cannot [bear] iniquity, together with the most solemn congregation.”

Ver. 14. *Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth*, &c.] The Targum is,

“my Word abhorreth;”

the Messiah, the essential Word. These are the same as before.

They are a trouble unto me; as they were kept and observed, either when they should not, or in a manner unbecoming:

I am weary to bear [them]; because of the sins with which they made him to serve, (^{<363A>}Isaiah 43:24).

Ver. 15. *And when ye spread forth your hands*, &c.] That is, in prayer, this being a prayer gesture: hence the Targum paraphrases it,

“and when the priests spread out their hands to pray for you.”

I will hide mine eyes from you; will not look upon them, nor regard their prayer; (see ^{<382D>}Lamentations 3:42)

yea, when ye make many prayers; as the Scribes and Pharisees did in Christ’s time, and thought to be heard for their much speaking, like the Gentiles, (^{<407D>}Matthew 6:7)

I will not hear; so as to give an answer, or fulfil their requests: the reason follows,

your hands are full of blood; of the prophets of the Lord, of Christ and his followers, whom they put to death.

Ver. 16. *Wash ye, make you clean, &c.*] These two words are to be regarded as one, since they intend the same thing, and suppose the persons spoken to to be unclean, as they were, notwithstanding their legal sacrifices and ceremonial ablutions; and are designed to convince them of it, to bring

them to a sense of their inability to cleanse themselves, to lead them to inquire after the proper means of it, and so to the fountain of Christ's blood to wash in, which only cleanses from it:

put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; the exhortation is not barely to put away their doings, but the evil of them, and that not from themselves, but from before the eyes of God, from the eyes of his vindictive justice, which is only done by the sacrifice of Christ; and the use of this exhortation is to show the necessity of putting away sin to salvation, and the insufficiency of the blood of bulls and goats to do it, since, notwithstanding these, it remains untaken away; and to direct to the sacrifice of Christ, which effectually does it.

Cease to do evil; either from ceremonial works done with a wicked mind, or from outward immoralities, such as shedding innocent blood, oppressing the fatherless and widow, things mentioned in the context; it denotes a cessation from a series and course of sinning, otherwise there is no ceasing from sin in this life.

Ver. 17. *Learn to do well*, &c.] Which men are naturally ignorant of; to do good they have no knowledge; nor can they that are accustomed to do evil learn to do well of themselves; but the Lord can teach them to profit, and of him they should ask wisdom, and desire, under the influence of his grace, to learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, and particularly to do acts of beneficence to all men, and especially to the household of faith; and also, the following ones,

seek judgment; seek to do justice between man and man in any cause depending, without respect of persons:

relieve the oppressed; the poor that are oppressed by their neighbours that are richer and mightier than they, right their wrongs, and deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors^{f33}:

judge the fatherless; do justice to them who have none to take care of them, and defend them:

plead for the widow; that is desolate, and has none to plead her cause.

Ver. 18. *Come now, and let us reason, together, saith the Lord*, &c.] These words stand not in connection either with the preceding or following, but are to be read in a parenthesis, and are thrown in for the

sake of the small remnant God had left among this wicked people, in order to comfort them, being distressed with sin. These, seeing their sins in their dreadful colours, and with all their aggravating circumstances, were ready to conclude that they were unpardonable; and, seeing God as an angry Judge, dared not come nigh him, but stood at a distance, fearing and expecting his vengeance to fall upon them, and therefore put away the promises, and refused to be comforted; when the Lord was pleased to encourage them to draw near to him, and come and reason with him: not at the bar of his justice; there is no reasoning with him there; none can contend with him, or answer him, one of a thousand; if he marks iniquity in strict justice, none can stand before him; there is no entering the lists with him upon the foot of justice, or at its bar: but at the bar of mercy, at the throne of grace; there the righteous may dispute with him from his declarations and promises, as well as come with boldness to him; and at the altar and sacrifice of Christ, and at the fountain of his blood: here sinners may reason with him from the virtue and efficacy of his blood and sacrifice; and from the Lord's proclamation of grace and mercy through him; and from his promises to forgive repenting and confessing sinners: and here God reasons with sensible souls from his own covenant promises and proclamations to forgive sin; from the aboundings of his grace over abounding sin; from the righteousness of Christ to justify, his blood to cleanse from sin, and his sacrifice to atone for it; and from the end of his coming into the world to save the chief of sinners: saying,

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Every sin is a transgression of the law, and hateful and abominable to God; no sin is venial in itself, but deserving of the wrath of God, and the curses of the law; all sin is mortal, the wages of it is death: but all are not alike; some are greater, others lesser; some are attended with aggravating circumstances, as when the persons that commit them have, besides the light of nature, also the law of Moses, or the Gospel of Christ; have had the advantage of a religious education; have sat under a Gospel ministry, and received much speculative light and knowledge; yea, have been under convictions of sin time after time, and yet have been ringleaders and encouragers of others in sin, guilty of very enormous crimes, which in themselves are comparable to "scarlet" and "crimson": and perhaps reference may be had to the sin of murder, since the persons, among whom these dwelt, their hands were full of blood; and may respect the crucifiers of Christ, among whom there were some

savingly convicted and converted. Moreover, they may be signified hereby on account of the effects of them, they defile men, provoke God to wrath, and, through the law, work wrath in their consciences; and may signify, that they are sins of a deep dye, and which have such a place in their hearts and consciences, that nothing can remove them but the blood of Christ: and besides are open, flagrant, and notorious to all, and especially to God; yet these, through the grace and blood of Jesus, become as white as wool and as snow: not that pardon of sin takes sin out of the hearts and natures of men, nor changes the nature of sin, or causes it to cease to be sin; but this is to be understood of the persons of sinners, who hereby are made so white, yea, whiter than this, (~~f30~~ Psalm 51:1) as they are considered in Christ, washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, which is fine linen, clean and white; God, seeing no iniquity in them, has thus graciously dealt with them, and they being without fault, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. It was with respect to this Scripture that the Jews in later times were wont to tie a scarlet thread to the head of the scapegoat, when he was sent into the wilderness; though at first they fastened it to the door of the outward porch, and then to the door of the inward porch, and, if it turned white, it was a sign their sins were forgiven them, but, if not, otherwise^{f34}; and it is owned by them, that it belongs to future time, the time of the Messiah^{f35}.

Ver. 19. *If ye be willing and obedient*, &c.] The Targum adds, “to my Word”: the Word made flesh, and dwelling among them; who would have gathered the inhabitants of Jerusalem to his ministry, to attend his word and ordinances, but their rulers would not:

ye shall eat the good of the land; the land of Canaan; as the Jews held the possession of that land, before the times of Christ, by their obedience to the laws of God, which were given them as a body politic, and which, so long as they observed, they were continued in the quiet and full enjoyment of all the blessings of it; so, when Christ came, had they received, embraced, and acknowledged him as the Messiah, and been obedient to his will, though only externally, they would have remained in their own land, and enjoyed all the good things in it undisturbed by enemies.

Ver. 20. *But if ye refuse and rebel*, &c.] The Targum is, “and do not receive my Word”; the Messiah, when come, neither his person, nor his doctrines and ordinances:

ye shall be devoured with the sword; of the Roman armies, as they were under Titus Vespasian; (see ^{<4121>}Matthew 22:7 ^{<4194>}Luke 19:44)

for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken [it]; now, by Isaiah, as well as in former times, (^{<4325>}Leviticus 26:25,33).

Ver. 21. *How is the faithful city become a harlot!* &c.] The city of Jerusalem, in which were the temple, and the pure worship of God, and was in the tribe of Judah, which ruled with God, and was very faithful with the saints when the ten tribes revolted, and fell in with the sin of Jeroboam; but now, in Isaiah's time, was become like a treacherous wife to her husband, unfaithful to the Lord, went after other lovers, committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, with stocks and stones; and in the times of Christ were a wicked and an adulterous generation, corrupting the word and worship of God; (see ^{<4129>}Matthew 12:39) (^{<4139>}Matthew 15:9)

it was full of judgment; strict justice was exercised privately between man and man, as well as in the public courts of judicature;

righteousness lodged in it; that is, righteous men, who walked in all the commandments of the Lord, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly; (see ^{<4183>}2 Peter 3:13)

but now murderers: of the prophets whom they stoned, who were sent unto them, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom they were the betrayers and murderers; (see ^{<4137>}Matthew 23:37 ^{<4172>}Acts 7:52).

Ver. 22. *Thy silver is become dross*, &c.] Meaning either that such persons, who had the appearance of goodness, looked like genuine silver, were now become reprobate, and, as the wicked of the earth, like dross, (^{<2150>}Jeremiah 6:30 ^{<4319>}Psalm 119:119) or that the word of God, which is as silver purified seven times, was now corrupted with false glosses and human traditions, which were as dross:

thy wine mixed with water^{f36}; the wine of the divine word, which was mixed and blended with the inventions of men, as before; so the roof of the church's mouth, which is no other than the ministry of the word, is compared to the best wine, (^{<2109>}Song of Solomon 7:9,11).

Ver. 23. *Thy princes [are] rebellious*, &c.] Stubborn and obstinate, refused to receive and acknowledge the Messiah; such were the Jewish rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, in the times of Christ.

And companions of thieves: who devoured widows' houses; made the temple, which was a house of prayer, a den of thieves; and took away the key of knowledge from the people, and would not suffer them to attend the ministry of the Gospel, (^{<4113>}Matthew 21:13 23:13,14 ^{<215>}Luke 11:52)

everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards. The Targum paraphrases it,

“everyone says to his neighbour, do me a favour in my cause, I will return “it” to thee in thy cause;”

and so justice was perverted:

they judge not the fatherless; that is, either they do not take their cause in hand at all, or, if they do, do not do them justice, but wrong them of their goods and estates, which, of right, belong to them:

neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them; there being no money to be got by undertaking it; see the case of the unjust judge, a picture of judges in those times, (^{<218>}Luke 18:2,3).

Ver. 24. *Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel,* &c.] All these names and titles, which are expressive of the majesty, power, and authority of God, are used to give the greater solemnity and weight to what follows; and to show that he is able to accomplish what he determines and threatens to do.

Ah! which is a particle, either expressive of grief at their wretched and miserable condition, or of indignation at their provoking sins and transgressions:

I will ease me of mine adversaries; or, “I will take comfort^{f37} of” them, by destroying them; expressing the pleasure and satisfaction he should take in avenging his justice on them: they had been a trouble to him, and had wearied him with their sins, and now he will ease himself of them by removing them. The Targum is,

“I will comfort the city of Jerusalem;”

not taking the sense of the words:

and avenge me of mine enemies; the Jews, who were enemies to Christ and his Gospel, and would not have him to reign over them, and which was the

cause of the destruction of their city, temple, and nation; (see ^{<2194>}Luke 19:14,27,42-44).

Ver. 25. *And I will turn my hand upon thee*, &c.] The remnant, according to the election of grace, left in Jerusalem, (^{<2009>}Isaiah 1:9) meaning not his afflicting hand, no, not even as a fatherly chastisement; though the Lord sometimes, by such means, purges away the iniquity of his people, as follows; (see ^{<2209>}Isaiah 27:9) much less his hand of wrath and vengeance, the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; but his hand of efficacious grace in conversion, with which he plucks sinners as brands out of the burning; delivers them from the power of Satan; turns their hearts to himself; opens them, to attend unto and understand divine things; breaks them in pieces with the hammer of his word; works grace in them, and carries on the good work in their souls: all which is owing to his mighty hand of grace upon them, and to the exertions of the exceeding greatness of his power towards them. This was accomplished in part in the conversion of a large number of the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards; and will be more fully accomplished in the latter day, when that people shall turn to the Lord, in consequence of his hand of powerful grace being turned on them. The phrase is used of the display of divine grace and mercy, in (^{<3107>}Zechariah 13:7)

and purely purge away thy dross; which the Targum rightly interprets of “ungodliness” or wickedness; it means the sins of converted ones, which, at conversion, they are purely purged from; not that sin, as to the being of it, is removed from them; that dwells in them, abides with them; and, like dross, is a heavy burden, a dead weight upon them, and will be while they are in this tabernacle, and makes them groan, being burdened; so far from it, that in their view it rather increases; they see the plague of their own hearts; and such innumerable swarms of corruption they never saw before; sin revives, and they die; but in conversion grace superabounds it, deluges over it, keeps down the force and power of it, so that it has not the dominion; the old man is put off concerning the former conversation, which ceases to be a series, a course of sinning: besides, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all the dross and filth of sin, the guilt is removed from the conscience, and perfect peace and full pardon take place; all iniquity is caused to pass from them, and they are clothed with change of raiment, the righteousness of Christ, by which they are justified from all things, and are pure, spotless, and without fault before the throne:

and take away all thy tin. The Targum also interprets this of iniquity, rendering it, “I will take away all thy sin”; but it is better to understand it of self-righteousness; which, as tin is of more worth than dross, and looks like silver; so this has the appearance of some good in it, and was what the Jews were fond of, trusted in, and depended on, and which they followed after, and endeavoured to establish and hold fast; but this in conversion is all taken away: the Lord, by his Spirit; convinces of the weakness and insufficiency of it, to justify in his sight; shows that it is not a righteousness, and will be of no service in that respect; yea, takes away these filthy rags, and clothes with the righteousness of Christ; causes the soul to drop and renounce its own righteousness, and put on that; and not only to renounce works before conversion, but all after it, as a profession of religion, subjection to Gospel ordinances, and all works, though done in faith, and in a right manner; a glaring instance we have of all this in one of that little remnant, the Apostle Paul, (^{<5086>}Philippians 3:6-9). Moreover, by “dross” and “tin”, or “tins”, in the plural number, may be meant persons; wicked and profane men, by the former, who should be put away like dross, (^{<4819>}Psalm 119:119) and self righteous persons, by the latter; who shine like silver, make a show of religion, appear outwardly righteous; but these, as well as the other, should be separated from the people of God, when the precious and the vile should be distinguished.

Ver. 26. *And I will restore thy judges as at the first,* &c.] This refers not to the times after the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews had judges and rulers, such as Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, as they had in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, or as in the times of David and Solomon; but it refers, as Kimchi observes, to the times of the Messiah; and is true of the apostles of Christ, who were set on twelve thrones, had power and authority from Christ to preach his Gospel, and to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in a doctrinal way, (^{<4028>}Matthew 19:28) for which they were abundantly qualified, having the spirit of counsel and of judgment resting upon them, as the prophets of old; and will be again verified in the ministers of the Gospel, at the time of the Jews’ conversion, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, have a clear discerning and judgment of things as at the first, (^{<2508>}Isaiah 52:8)

and thy counsellors as at the beginning; which is to be understood of the same persons; the apostles at Jerusalem gave advice and counsel in matters of difficulty, and were consulted on special occasions, of which there is an instance in (^{<4450>}Acts 15:1-41) and ordinary ministers of the word are

qualified, and especially will be in the latter day, to give advice both to sensible sinners, inquiring the way of salvation, and to saints when under desertion, and have lost their beloved, or have any matters of difficulty upon them, whether with respect to faith or practice.

Afterward thou shall be called the city of righteousness: when many shall be converted through the hand of the Lord turned upon them, and become incorporated into a church state, and having the apostles and other ministers of the Gospel among them, with proper officers over them, as the first Christian church at Jerusalem had; and the members of it were righteous persons, such as were justified by the righteousness of Christ, and lived righteously, walking in the ordinances of the Lord, and as became the Gospel of Christ, and will be the case of the churches of Christ in the latter day:

the faithful city; to Christ, his Gospel, ordinances, and one another, as the first Christians at Jerusalem were; (see ^{<4422>}Acts 2:12 4:32,33). A true church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, who keep the ordinances as they were delivered; stand first in the faith of the Gospel; take care that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution; and do not suffer sin upon one another, nor bear them that are evil, whether in doctrine or practice; and which in the latter day will be the case of the churches of Christ in a remarkable manner, when they will justly bear this character.

Ver. 27. *Zion shall be redeemed with judgment,* &c.] The blessing of redemption by Christ is the source and foundation of the other blessings of grace, before mentioned, the little remnant are favoured with, as justification, pardon of sin, and conversion, (^{<2018>}Isaiah 1:18) (^{<2025>}Isaiah 1:25,26 44:22 53:10,11 ^{<3808>}Zechariah 10:8) it is of a spiritual nature; the redemption of the soul is a deliverance from the captivity of sin, Satan, and the law, and is plenteous and eternal; the objects of redeeming grace are "Zion"

and her converts; not the world, but the church is redeemed by Christ; for by Zion is meant, not a place, but people, even the church and people of God, who frequently bear the name of Zion in this prophecy, and in other passages of Scripture, both of the Old and of the New Testament; (see ^{<3914>}Isaiah 49:14 ^{<5822>}Hebrews 12:22) compared to Mount Zion for its height and holiness; for being the object of God's love, the instance of his choice, the place of his habitation; where his worship is, he grants his presence, and distributes his blessings; for its being a perfection of beauty, the joy of the

whole earth, well fortified and immovable: and the redemption of the church by Christ is

with judgment; with the judgment and vengeance of God on Christ, and through the condemnation of him as her Head and representative; with the judgment of God, which is according to truth, in whose judgment she is truly redeemed by the blood of Christ, and really delivered from her bondage, according to his justice and holiness, which are glorified by it: but here the redemption of Zion seems to mean a more glorious state of the church, a restoration of her to her former glory, or to a greater, which will be in the latter day, and may be discerned as drawing near by the signs of the times fulfilling, (~~4213~~ Luke 21:28) whereby the truth and faithfulness of God, in his promises concerning it, will be honoured, and he will appear to be a God of judgment:

and her converts with righteousness; so called, not because converted by the church, for conversion is God's work, and not man's; no man can effect his own conversion, he is passive in it; nor can any others, not their nearest friends and relations; they can only pray for it, as Abraham did for Ishmael, and bring them under the means; nor are ministers sufficient, only instruments of conversion neither Zion's ministers nor members can convert one sinner: but they are so called, either because converted "in" her, through the ministry of the word as a means, preached in the midst of her, (~~4876~~ Psalm 87:5) or because converted "to" her, (~~23016~~ Isaiah 60:5) being made to submit to the ordinances of the church, and to join themselves to it. "Converts" are the objects of redemption by Christ; all that are redeemed are, sooner or later, converted; and all that are converted are redeemed; and the redemption of them by his blood is consistent "with" the "righteousness" of God; for hereby sin is fully condemned and punished; the justice of God has all its demands, and the law is completely fulfilled; and so the end of God is answered, which is to declare his righteousness by it. Moreover, in the latter day, when there, will be a redemption and deliverance or the church out of all her troubles and distresses, her converts will manifestly appear to be all righteous, being justified with the spotless righteousness of Christ, (~~23021~~ Isaiah 60:21).

Ver. 28. *And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners [shall be] together, &c.]* Of the beast and false prophet, of the followers of antichrist, the man of sin, who are transgressors of the law of God, and sinners against the Lord; the destruction of these, or the breaking of them

into shivers, as the word ^{f38} signifies, (see ~~4127~~ Revelation 2:27) will be at the time of Zion's redemption, and make a part of it; and it shall be all at once and together; these sinners will be all together consumed out of the earth, and these wicked antichristian ones will be no more in it, (~~1445~~ Psalm 104:35 ~~6818~~ Revelation 18:8)

and they that forsake the Lord; his word, his worship and ordinances; as the Papists have manifestly done, by setting up their own unwritten traditions against the word of God, by adulterating his ordinances, and introducing new ones, and by worshipping images of gold, silver, brass, and wood;

wherefore they shall be consumed; with the breath of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, (~~5118~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Ver. 29. *For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, &c.*] Though there is a change of persons in the words, the same are intended; and design such, who being convinced of the idolatries of the church of Rome they have been fond of, and delighted in, will be ashamed of them, and relinquish them, and come out of Babylon a little before the destruction of it; for under oaks, and such like green trees, idolatry used to be committed, to which the allusion is; (see ~~4120~~ Jeremiah 2:20 3:6) and so the Targum interprets it of "trees of idols"; that is, under which idolatry was practised:

and ye shall be confounded for the gardens ye have chosen; where also idolatrous practices were used, (see ~~2413~~ Isaiah 65:3 66:17) and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“and ye shall be ashamed of the gardens of idols, from whom ye have sought help.”

The sense is the same as before; unless both clauses should rather be understood of the destruction of sinners, before spoken of, who at that time will be filled with shame and confusion, they in vain praying to their idols for help; which sense the following words incline to.

Ver. 30. *For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, &c.*] Shall be stripped of all their dependencies and self confidence, and be as naked and as bare as an oak that has cast its leaves; or thus, in a way of just retaliation, since they have desired oaks, and sacrificed under them, they

shall be like them as in the wintertime, stripped of all their riches, honour, substance, and desirable things; (see ^{<6682>}Revelation 18:12-19)

and as a garden that hath no water; in which the herbs and plants are dried up and withered: it signifies the uncomfortable condition such shall be in, as before.

Ver. 31. *And the strong shall be as tow*, &c.] ^{^wsj} h, “that strong one”, who is eminently so; the little horn, whose look is more stout than his fellows, (^{<2071>}Daniel 7:20) the beast who had great power and authority given by the dragon, (^{<6632>}Revelation 13:2,4,7) who shall be cast alive into the lake of fire; when he will be like tow in those devouring flames, easily, quickly, and irrecoverably consumed, (^{<2071>}Daniel 7:11) (^{<6621>}Revelation 19:20)

and the maker of it as a spark, or “his work”; so the Targum,

“and the work of their hands shall be as a spark of fire;”

or like the embers and ashes of a coal, which are blown away and lost at once: so antichrist, and all his evil works, as well as all his evil workers under him, will be entirely consumed: or, as it may be rendered, “he that wrought him”: that is, Satan, for his coming is after the working of Satan; he has his seat, power, and authority, from the dragon, the old serpent, and the devil, and may be truly called a creature of his, (^{<5309>}2 Thessalonians 2:9)

and they shall both burn together; both the pope and the devil in the lake of fire and brimstone, into which they will both be cast, (^{<6630>}Revelation 20:10)

and none shall quench [them]; that fire will be unquenchable and everlasting; they will be tormented for ever and ever, and so will all the worshippers of the beast, (^{<4124>}Matthew 25:41 ^{<4104>}Mark 9:44 ^{<6641>}Revelation 14:11 20:10). The Chaldee paraphrase is,

“so the wicked shall be consumed, and their evil works, and there shall be no mercy upon them.”