

# CHAPTER 54

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 54

As the former chapter is a prophecy of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow; this is a prophecy of that part of his glory which relates to the flourishing estate of his church, as the fruit of his death, and explains and enlarges upon the promise of his having a numerous seed. The prophecy reaches from the death and resurrection of Christ to his second coming; and describes the state of the church during that time, which had been like a barren woman, but now fruitful, which was matter of joy; and would increase, and have yet a more numerous issue, through the conversion and accession of the Gentiles; and therefore is bid not to fear, since she should not bear the shame and reproach of widowhood, (<sup>2540</sup>Isaiah 54:1-4), the reason confirming which is, because Christ was her husband, who was her Maker and Redeemer, the God of Israel, and of the whole earth, (<sup>2546</sup>Isaiah 54:5), and though she might for some time be under some dark providences, and seem to be forsaken of God, and lie under his displeasure; yet she is assured of the love of God towards her, that it is constant and perpetual; which is illustrated by the oath and covenant of God with Noah, and by its being more immovable than mountains and hills, (<sup>2546</sup>Isaiah 54:6-10), and though she would sometimes be in a very afflicted and uncomfortable condition, yet should be raised again to a state of great honour and splendour, of spiritual knowledge, peace, and safety, (<sup>2541</sup>Isaiah 54:11-14) and that all her enemies, that gathered together against her, should perish, and all their attempts be unsuccessful, since the Lord was on her side, and would defend her cause, and protect her, (<sup>2545</sup>Isaiah 54:15-17).

**Ver. 1.** *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear,* &c.] The Targum interprets this of Jerusalem, paraphrasing the words thus,

“sing praise, O Jerusalem, which was as a barren woman that bears not;”

and so the apostle applies the words of the text to the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, the then present Gospel church, (<sup>406</sup>Galatians 4:26,27),

which, at the first setting of it up, in the times of Christ, during his life and at the time of his death, and before the day of Pentecost, was like a barren woman; the number of converts were very small; few believed the report of the Gospel, professed Christ, and submitted to his ordinances; the names of the disciples were but a hundred and twenty. Though some understand this of the Jewish church, under the Old Testament dispensation, whose members were not many, and whose proselytes from the Gentiles were but few; and others of the Gentile world, before the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel in it; but the former sense is to be preferred, having the suffrage of the apostle:

*break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child*; among whom there were few instances of conversion, scarce any begotten and born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, and no signs thereof; but now it being otherwise, and multitudes being converted both in Judea and in the Gentile world, the church and its members are called upon to express their joy aloud in songs of praise, setting forth the glory of efficacious grace, in the regeneration of men; for as this is matter of joy to the angels of heaven, so to the saints on earth:

*for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord*; more souls were born again, and added to the church after the death of Christ, when she was in a desolate condition, like a woman deprived of her husband, and in a widowhood state, then there were while Christ was here on earth, personally present with his people, and preaching the Gospel himself unto men; three thousand were converted under one sermon, and great numbers afterwards were added, so that the church at Jerusalem was in a much more flourishing condition after the death of Christ than before; more fruitful when it was become like a widow than when the bridegroom was with her; and the church of Christ still increased yet more and more afterwards, as the following verses predict. The Targum is,

“more shall be the children of Jerusalem than the children of the habitable city.”

The edition of it, in the king of Spain’s Bible, has it,

“than the children of Rome;”

and so it is quoted by R. Elias<sup>f1074</sup>, and by Buxtorf<sup>f1075</sup>. The Jews understand this prophecy of their deliverance from their present condition by the Messiah; and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the prosperity of it.

**Ver. 2.** *Enlarge the place of thy tent, &c.*] To which the church is compared, because of its uncertain and movable condition, being sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and because of its outward meanness and weakness, as well as its small extent; but now it is signified that it should be enlarged, and room be made for an accession of inhabitants to it; or, in other words, that the Gospel church state should not be confined to Jerusalem, but should take place in other parts of Judea, and in Galilee, and in Samaria; hence we read of churches in those places, (~~408~~ Acts 9:31):

*and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation;* alluding to the curtains of which tents or tabernacles were made, which used to be stretched out on poles or stakes, in order to make more room, and hold more people. This may respect the spreading of the Gospel by the apostles, who may be here meant, and the success of it, especially among the Gentiles; who may be said to stretch out the curtains of the tent, the church, when, according to their commission, they went and preached the Gospel to every creature. First they travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching to the Jews only; but when they wholly rejected the Gospel, they turned to the Gentiles, and went everywhere preaching the word, (~~411~~ Acts 11:19 13:46), and their ministry was blessed to the conversion of multitudes, and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the world. The Apostle Paul was an eminent instrument of stretching these curtains, who went from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum, fully preaching the Gospel of Christ, (~~519~~ Romans 15:19):

*spare not:* any cost or pains, to spread the Gospel, enlarge the interest of Christ, and increase his church and people; as did not the apostles of Christ, who may be supposed to be the persons here addressed:

*lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;* the curtains being stretched out, it was necessary the cords, to which they were fastened, should be lengthened, that they might reach further, and take in a greater compass; and the wider the tent is made by such means, the stronger should be the staves, and the more surely should they be drove and fixed in the earth, to hold the cords with the curtains bound unto them; all which express the

enlargement of the church in the Gentile world, by means of the Gospel ministry and discipline. The Targum is,

“multiply the people of thy camp, and strengthen the governors.”

**Ver. 3.** *For thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left, &c.*] To the south, and to the north, as the Targum, like an inundation of water, that breaks through and overflows the banks of the river, and spreads itself in the adjacent countries; or like a warehouse overstocked with goods, bursts the walls in which they are pent up; or rather as infants break forth from the womb at the time of birth, as Pharez did, from whence he had his name, (<sup><0132></sup>Genesis 38:29) (see <sup><2131></sup>Hosea 13:13), or as, when a country is become exceeding numerous, the inhabitants break out, and go forth beyond their borders, and seek new settlements, the place of their abode being too small for them; so it shall be in the latter day, through the vast number of converts that will be made; (see <sup><2419></sup>Isaiah 49:19,20):

*and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles;* where formerly only Heathens lived, there the Gospel of Christ shall be carried by his apostles and other ministers; and being succeeded to the conversion of many souls, through the power of divine grace accompanying it, a spiritual seed, the seed of the church, shall take place, and dwell there; this was true in the first ages of Christianity, more especially in Constantine’s time; and will be more fully accomplished in the latter day, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in:

*and make the desolate cities to be inhabited:* such cities as were destitute of the knowledge of Christ and his salvation, and of all divine and spiritual things, shall now be inhabited by spiritual men, such as believe in Christ, and profess his name; such cities as Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, and many others.

**Ver. 4.** *Fear not, &c.*] The fulfilment of these things; however unlikely and unpromising they might seem, yet God was able to perform them; and therefore way should not be given to a fearful, distrustful, and unbelieving heart:

*for thou shall not be ashamed;* as men are, when disappointed of what they have been hoping for and expecting; but so it should not be with the church, she should not be ashamed of her hope, faith, and confidence; for there would be a performance of all that the Lord had spoken: nor should she be ashamed of her barrenness, which should cease; and of the fewness

of her children or converts, which would be many; and of the straitness of the place of her tent or habitation, which would now be enlarged:

*neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame*; other words made use of to express the same thing, and for the further confirmation of it, that she needed not, and that she should not be put to the blush, or to shame and confusion, on the above accounts:

*for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth*; by which may be meant either the small number of converts at the first preaching of the Gospel; or more especially that there were so few of the wise and learned, the rich and noble, that embraced it, with which the first Christians were greatly upbraided; or those persecutions which attended them the three first centuries, which, being now at an end, shall be forgotten:

*and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more*; which signifies much the same as before, the seeming desolate estate of the church upon the death of Christ; when she seemed to be deprived of her husband, and forsaken by him, and left as a widow, and without children, barren and unfruitful; which was reckoned reproachful with the Jews, (~~Q125~~ Luke 1:25).

**Ver. 5.** *For thy Maker [is] thine Husband, &c.*] That is, Christ, the Husband of the church, and of every true believer; who secretly betrothed them to himself in eternity, having asked him of his father; and, being given to him, openly espouses them in conversion, one by one, as a chaste virgin; which he will do more publicly in a body at the last day, when the marriage of the Lamb will be come, when he will appear as the bridegroom of his people; and to which character he acts up, by loving them with a love of complacency and delight, most affectionately and constantly; by sympathizing with them in all their troubles; by nourishing and cherishing them as his own flesh, and interesting them in all he is and has. It is, in the Hebrew text<sup>f1076</sup> “thy Makers, thy Husbands”, Father, Son, and Spirit; though the relation of a husband is more peculiar to Christ; and the words are a reason of the church’s fruitfulness, and why she need not fear the performance of what was promised her; and which is wonderful and amazing; he who stands in such a near and endearing relation to his church and people, is the “Maker” of all things, yea, their Maker, both as creatures, and as new creatures:

*the Lord of hosts is his name*; of armies above and below, in heaven, and in earth; how great therefore must this their Husband be! to what honour and dignity are they advanced! how safe must they be under his protection! nor need they fear any enemy:

*thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel*; he who is the church's Husband is her Redeemer; and who so fit as he to redeem her from sin, Satan, and the law, and every enemy; who is of the same nature with her, so dearly loves her, and so able to save her? for which he is also abundantly qualified, being holy in both his natures, in his person and offices, in his birth, life, and death; for this seems greatly to respect him as man, as he was a descendant of the Israelitish nation, and of the seed of Abraham:

*the God of the whole earth shall he be called*: not of Israel only, but of all the nations of the world, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; the earth was made by him; the world and all that are in it are his: he is the Governor among the nations; and in the latter day will appear to be the King over all the earth, and will be owned as such; so great and illustrious a Person is the church's Husband. These words are applied by the Jews to the times of the Messiah<sup>f1077</sup>.

**Ver. 6.** *For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit*, &c.] That has lost her husband by death, is solitary upon it, is like one forsaken, and mourns for the loss of him; or is forsaken by a living husband, rejected by him, having a bill of divorce from him, and so she grieves at his unkindness to her, and the reproach cast upon her; as such an one was the church when it was first constituted, when the members of which it consisted were called out of the world by the grace of God, and formed into a church state; almost as soon as ever they were thus embodied together, Christ was taken from them by death, and they were left alone, and filled with grief and trouble: the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel were persecuted from place to place, and all of them lost their lives for the cause in which they were engaged; and the church endured grievous persecutions during the three first centuries, when she seemed to be forsaken of God, and was greatly oppressed and grieved in spirit. Some understand this of the Gentiles, and of their state and condition when called, as described in (~~400~~ Ephesians 2:10), but rather it may be interpreted of the Jews, now cut off and forsaken; and who, when they come to be sensible of their case, will be grieved and mourn, even

when they shall be called and converted in the latter day; but I think the first sense is best:

*and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God*; or, “and as a wife of youth<sup>f1078</sup>”; whom a man marries in his youth, and she a young woman herself, which makes it the more grievous to be despised, refused, and forsaken, or to seem to be so. The words may be rendered thus, “and”, or “but, a wife of youth thou art, though thou wast despised”<sup>f1079</sup>, or “refused, saith thy God”; that is, though thou hast been seemingly despised and cast off, my providential dispensations towards thee may be so interpreted by thyself and others; yet I am thy God, thy Maker, Redeemer, and Husband, and thou art as dear to me as the wife of a man’s youth, for whom he has the most passionate love; and which agrees with what follows.

**Ver. 7.** *For a small moment have I forsaken thee*, &c.] The people of God seem to be forsaken by him when he hides his face from them, as it is afterwards explained; when they are in distress, and he does not immediately appear for them; when they are afflicted in body and mind, though these afflictions are but for a moment; nor are they really forsaken, not as to things temporal or spiritual; God never forsakes the work of his own hands, nor his people, at least for ever, or so as that they shall perish. Some interpret this of the seventy years’ captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which was but a very short time; others of the times of ignorance in the Gentile world before the coming of Christ, which God winked at, when he overlooked them, and took no notice of them; but I choose to understand it of the time and state of the Christian church, during the ten persecutions of Rome Pagan, when it seemed to be forsaken of God, and to be triumphed over by her enemies:

*but with great mercies will I gather thee*; they had been scattered about by persecution, but now should be gathered together in bodies, and have their public assemblies, and worship God openly, none making them afraid; which was fulfilled in Constantine’s time, when Paganism was abolished, and Christianity established throughout the Roman empire; when public places for Christian worship were opened everywhere, the Gospel was freely preached, and multitudes were gathered by effectual calling, and brought into the Gospel church, which was now in a very flourishing condition; for this is not to be understood of the gathering of the captive Jews from Babylon, nor of the calling of the Gentiles by the ministry of the

apostles, nor of the restoration and conversion of the Jews in the latter day, though this is more eligible than the former, and much less of the gathering of the saints at the last day.

**Ver. 8.** *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, &c.*] This signifies much the same as before, when God hides his face from his people, withdraws his gracious presence, and does not grant the discoveries of his love; or they are under the frowns of his providence, and have not the smiles of his face and the light of his countenance as formerly, then they think they are forsaken by him; though all this is but for a moment, a small period of time; and though it seems to be in “wrath”, it is but “little wrath”; and this wrath is no other than the displeasure of a loving and tender hearted father. The Syriac version renders it, “great wrath”; and so Schultens<sup>f1080</sup> thinks the word signifies “overflowing wrath”<sup>f1081</sup>, and the vehemency of it; to which agrees R. Menachem<sup>f1082</sup>, who interprets it, “the heat of wrath”; so the Lord’s suffering such a scene of bloody persecutions to attend his church in the first ages of Christianity might seem to be:

*but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer*; all the dealings of God with his people, however dark and dismal they be, whatever appearances there are in them of wrath and displeasure, they are all agreeable to, and do not contradict, his everlasting love; and sooner or later he will make it manifest, he has mercy in store for his people, which he does and will exercise towards them; this mercy flows from his love and kindness to them, which kindness is everlasting, and continues in and through all states and conditions into which they come; the consideration of which is very comfortable and encouraging, and of which they may be assured from the relation the Lord stands in to them as their Redeemer; for, having redeemed them at the expense of his blood, he will effectually gather them by grace in calling, and will never lose them, or suffer them to perish here or hereafter.

**Ver. 9.** *For this is as the waters of Noah unto me, &c.*] Some copies, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, read these two words, *ym yk*, as one, thus, *ymyk*, “as the days of Noah”; and this is followed by the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; both readings may be kept, and joined in one, and the sense be, “for this is as the waters that were in the days of Noah unto me”; so Kimchi and Menachem join them. The meaning is, that God’s dispensation towards his people, at the time the prophecy refers to, is like that of his to Noah and his family; and the love he bears to them is



like that which he bore to him; and the covenant he has made with them is as that he made with him:

*for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth*; he gave his word for it, which is as firm as his oath; he made a covenant with Noah, and confirmed it by a rainbow, that the waters should no more go over the earth as they had, and that the world should be no more destroyed by a flood, (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 9:9-17):

*so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee*; for though the Lord's people are by nature children of wrath, as others, he has not appointed them to it, nor will he suffer it to fall upon them, but saves them from it through the righteousness of Christ, who has borne it for them; and though he rebukes by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, and by his providences, yet not in wrath, but in love; and of this he has given the strongest assurances; he has not only said it, but swore to it in covenant, (<sup><0000></sup>Psalm 89:3,33-35). The Jews<sup>f1083</sup> refer this prophecy to the times of the Messiah.

**Ver. 10.** *For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, &c.*] As sometimes by earthquakes, and as they will at the last day, when the earth shall be dissolved, and all in it, things the most solid, firm, and durable: it may be understood comparatively; sooner shall these depart and be removed than the kindness and covenant of God: it may be interpreted figuratively of revolutions in kingdoms and states, and particularly of the abolition of Paganism in the times of Constantine; and which is expressed in much such language; “the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places”, (<sup><0004></sup>Revelation 6:14). Kimchi observes, that mountains and hills may be interpreted of the kings of the nations; with this compare (<sup><0005></sup>Revelation 6:15-17):

*but my kindness shall not depart from thee*; the love of God to his people is an everlasting love; it always continues; it never did, nor never will depart, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their depraved state by nature, their actual sins and transgressions, their many revoltings and backslidings; though the Lord may hide his face from them, and afflict them, still he loves them; whatever departs from them, his kindness shall not; though riches may flee away from them, friends stand aloof off from them, health may be taken away, and life itself, yet the love of God is always the same; and so, whatever providences may attend his church and interest in any

period of time, he has the same paternal care for it, and kindness for his people, as ever:

*neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed*; the covenant of grace made with Christ and his people in him from everlasting, so called, because peace is a considerable article of it; even that peace which was upon the heart and thought of God from everlasting; the scheme of which was drawn by him; all things relating to it were settled in this covenant, as that Christ should be the Maker of it, and that it should be made by his blood; besides, peace includes all the blessings of grace which that covenant is stored with; and the covenant is the spring and source of all peace, spiritual and eternal: moreover, as this refers to Gospel times, the new covenant is here meant, and the publication of it, in which the Gospel of peace, or peace by Jesus Christ, is preached unto men; to which may be added, that one part, at least, of the sense of the passage, may be, that notwithstanding all the troubles and exercises the church of Christ should meet with from Rome Pagan or Papal, yet the promise and covenant of God, that it should enjoy peace and prosperity in the latter day, should never be made void, but should have its sure and certain accomplishment:

*saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee*; for all springs from the mercy of God, and not the merits of men; and therefore the fulfilment of the covenant and promises may be depended upon.

**Ver. 11.** *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted*, &c.] Or, “O thou poor”<sup>f1084</sup> church; for the first Christian churches chiefly consisted of poor persons, not many mighty and noble being called; and which were greatly “afflicted” with false teachers, who broached errors and heresies, and made schisms among them; and “tossed with tempests” like a ship at sea; or “stormed”<sup>f1085</sup> with the rage and fury of violent persecutors, such as the Roman emperors were; and not “comforted”, having none to administer any external comfort or relief to them; none of the kings or princes of the earth, or any civil magistrate to protect and defend them; what comfort they had was internal and spiritual; what they had from Christ and his Spirit, and by the word and ordinances; or rather this may describe the state of the church under Papal tyranny and persecution, which brings it nearer to the times of peace and prosperity after promised:

*behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours*; or, “with paint”<sup>f1086</sup>; such as women used to paint their faces or eyes with, (<sup>2000</sup>2 Kings 9:30 <sup>2001</sup>Jeremiah 4:30). The Targum is,

“behold, I will lay with paint the stones of thy pavement;”

and the words seem plainly to design the stones of a pavement, and perhaps by an hypallage or transposition may be rendered,

*I will lay thy pavement with glistering stones*; so the word is translated (~~1~~1 Chronicles 29:2) or, “with stones of paint”<sup>f1087</sup>; which are of the colour of the “stibium”, or paint before mentioned, and which was of a black colour; and Aben Ezra says the word here signifies a precious stone of a black colour; perhaps black marble is meant, a stone fit for pavements; but, be these stones what they will, they design in the spiritual sense the materials of a Gospel church, those “lively stones” which

*are built up a spiritual house*, and which are beautified with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; and may also denote that the lowest and meanest of the Lord’s people, pointed out by stones of the pavement, should be thus adorned:

*and lay thy foundations with sapphires*; a precious stone of a white colour, according to R. Saadiah Gaon; but, according to Aben Ezra, of a red colour; though the sapphire is usually said to be of a sky colour, shining with specks of gold. The Targum renders it, “with precious stones”; and so the foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem is said to be garnished with all manner of precious stones, (~~21~~Revelation 21:19,20), this may respect Christ, the sure foundation God has laid in Zion, the foundation of the apostles and prophets; the one and only foundation of the church of Christ, and all true believers, who is more precious than sapphires, or all the most precious stones; he always has been the foundation of his church in all ages; but the meaning is, that he shall now appear most clearly and manifestly to be the foundation, and to be a firm, rich, and glorious one; (see ~~24~~Exodus 24:10).

**Ver. 12.** *And I will make thy windows of agates*, &c.] Some sort of which stones, Pliny<sup>f1088</sup> says, were valued for their clearness like glass; but the stone which bears this name with us is not clear and lucid enough to make windows of. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “of jasper”, a stone more fit for that purpose; and it is interpreted of the jasper in the Talmud<sup>f1089</sup>; so “the light” of the New Jerusalem is said to be like unto the “jasper stone”, (~~21~~Revelation 21:11). Some take the crystal to be meant, which suits well with windows; the word<sup>f1090</sup> for which has its name from the sun, because by means of them the rays and light of

the sun are let into a house, and illuminate it; these in a figurative sense may design the ministers of the Gospel, who are the lights of the world, especially of the church; and the word and ordinances administered by them, by means of which the light of spiritual knowledge, joy, and comfort, is let into the churches, and into the souls of men, from Christ, the sun of righteousness. The phrase signifies, that in the latter day their ministrations should be very clear and bright, and be greatly owned, and be very successful: “and thy gates of carbuncles”; precious stones so called from their fiery flaming colour. The gates of the New Jerusalem are said to be so many pearls, (<sup><4021></sup>Revelation 21:21) which there, as here, signify the entrance into the church of God, which is through Christ, who is the door into it, and through faith in him, which works by love; these gates will be open in the latter day to receive many, who will come in great numbers, and are called “praise”, (<sup><2011></sup>Isaiah 60:11,18), which will be expressed in very warm and lively strains of love and affection, of which the carbuncle may be a symbol:

*and all thy borders of pleasant stones*; true believers, called “lively stones”, and who are pleasant in the sight of God and Christ, and are taken pleasure in by one another; (see <sup><1924></sup>Psalms 102:14). The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “thy wall”, which agree with (<sup><4018></sup>Revelation 21:18), where the wall of the New Jerusalem is said to be of jasper.

**Ver. 13.** *And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*, &c.] The children of the church, who are born in her, and nursed up at her side, and who are the children of God by adoption, which is made manifest by regeneration; these the Lord will take care of that they be “taught”, even “all” of them, from the least to the greatest, (<sup><2034></sup>Jeremiah 31:34), they shall be taught of the Lord himself, by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as means, and by his Spirit, as the efficient; by whom they are taught to know themselves, their vileness and sinfulness, their folly and weakness, their want of right counsels, and the insufficiency of their own to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him; him as the only Saviour, able and willing so to know him as to believe in him, receive him, and walk on in him; this had an accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel; (see <sup><4065></sup>John 6:45) and will have a further one in the latter day, when there will be a greater effusion of the Spirit, when the doctrines of the Gospel will be taught and understood more clearly, fully, and largely:

*and great shall be the peace of thy children*; the inward peace of their minds in and from Christ, arising from a view of their justification by his righteousness, from the sprinklings of his blood upon their consciences, and from the discoveries of his love to their souls, enjoyed in a way of believing, and by means of the word and ordinances; also peace among themselves, harmony and concord, and no more strifes, contentions, and animosities; likewise outward peace from enemies, no more persecution or war. This word includes all kind of prosperity, external and internal, temporal and spiritual. This, with the following verses, explain the figurative phrases used in the foregoing. These words are applied by the Jews<sup>f1091</sup> to the times of the Messiah, when all Israel shall learn the law from the Lord; so the Targum,

“all thy children shall know the law of the Lord;”

but it is much better understood of all the children of the church, the true Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, learning the Gospel of Christ.

**Ver. 14.** *In righteousness shalt thou be established, &c.*] In the righteousness of Christ, from whence flows the peace before spoken of, and which is the stability of the church of Christ, and the security of it and its members from condemnation. The doctrine of justification by Christ’s righteousness is, as Luther calls it, “*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*”, the article of the church, by which, as it is held fast or neglected, it stands or falls: or be established in exercising righteousness, doing justice and judgment, which, as it is the support and establishment of a kingdom and state, so of the church; for if purity of manners, holiness and righteousness, are neglected, a church soon comes to decay and ruin; but such will be the holiness of the professors of religion in the latter day, that every pot and vessel in it shall be holiness to the Lord, (<sup>384D</sup>Zechariah 14:20):

*thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear*; so far from it, that thou shalt not be in the least afraid of it, neither from within nor from without; not from false teachers that oppress the mind with legal doctrine; nor from persecutors that oppress and injure in person and property: the church will be now free from the oppression and tyranny of Rome, or mystical Babylon, which will now fall, and from the persecution of the antichristian states, on whom the vials of God’s wrath will be poured, and so the church will be no more in fear of them; the words may be rendered, “therefore thou shalt not fear”<sup>f1092</sup>; there will be no cause for it, no occasion of it:

*and from terror; it shall not come near thee*; the terror of the antichristian beast and powers, which shall be no more, after their last effort next mentioned.

**Ver. 15.** *Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me, &c.*] Not by the Lord, by his command or order to do his will, and execute his pleasure, which sometimes was the case, as in Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and others; but so it shall not be, when the enemies of Christ and his people gather together against them in the latter day; this will be by the means of three unclean spirits like frogs that will come out of the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet; even spirits of devils, Popish priests, and Jesuits, who will instigate, stir up, and get together the antichristian kings of the earth to the battle of almighty God, (<sup>6664</sup>Revelation 16:14,16). Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret them of Gog and Magog:

*whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake*; because of the love that I bear to thee, they shall not succeed, or do thee any hurt, but shall perish; or, “shall fall to thee”<sup>f1093</sup>; so far from doing thee any hurt, they shall come over to thee, and be on thy side; be joined to thee, as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, the remnant that shall escape, and be converted, and give glory to God, (<sup>6613</sup>Revelation 11:13) or rather, “shall fall before thee”<sup>f1094</sup>, in thy sight; or, as the Targum, in the midst of thee; which remarkably paraphrases the words thus,

“at the end the kings of the nations, which are gathered together to afflict thee, O Jerusalem, shall fall in the midst of thee;”

for the kings of the earth that shall be gathered together against Christ and his church shall fall in battle before them, and their flesh shall become meat for the fowls of the heaven; the beast and false prophet, in company with them, will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, and the remnant be slain with the sword of Christ, (<sup>6617</sup>Revelation 19:17-21).

**Ver. 16.** *Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, &c.*] Into which he puts his iron to soften it, that he may beat it, and form it into what shape he pleases; which descriptive clause is added to show that it is a blacksmith that is intended, and to distinguish him from the carpenter and mason, of whom this word is also used, who deal, the one in wood, and the other in stone, and neither of which requires fire: now the Lord observes, to the comfort of his people, surrounded by enemies with

instruments of war in their hands, that he made the smith that made these, not only as a man, but as an artificer gave him all the skill he has in making military weapons; and therefore could take away his skill, or hinder him from making any, or destroy and defeat, and render useless those that are made; and therefore they had nothing to fear from warlike preparations. Some understand this of the devil, that great incendiary of mankind; and others of a council of war, that forms the design, blows up the coals of contention, and brings forth the plan of operation in war, it follows, as a further description of the smith,

*and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work*: who takes the iron out of the fire which he blows, as an instrument to work upon, and which he forms into a military weapon, as an arrow, a sword, a spear, or shield; or, “for their work”<sup>f1095</sup>; for the use of the enemies of Christ and his church:

*and I have created the waster to destroy*; military men, soldiers that use the above weapons of destruction for that purpose; these are God’s creatures, and he can destroy or disappoint them, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. Some understand this also of the devil, who is by way of eminence the waster of mankind; others of tyrannical princes; I should choose to interpret it of the Romish antichrist, that waster and destroyer of the souls of men, and of the antichristian states that destroy the earth, and shall be destroyed themselves; or of the Turk, the locust, whose king is called Apollyon and Abaddon, which signifies a waster and a destroyer, (<sup>6118</sup>Revelation 11:18 9:11). These are said to be “created” by the Lord, not only because they are his creatures, the work of his hands, but because they are raised up by his providence, according to his secret purpose, as Pharaoh was, to show his power in them; and are permitted by him to continue for awhile to fulfil his will, being entirely dependent upon him, and subject to his influence, direction, and overruling providence; and therefore his people had no reason to be afraid of them.

**Ver. 17.** *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, &c.*] All weapons of war, as the Targum, which are made with a design to hurt and destroy the people of God, shall be rendered useless; not one of them shall prosper to the advantage of their enemies, or so as to answer their design; nor to the hurt and prejudice, ruin and destruction, of the saints:

*and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment*; that shall raise any calumny upon thee, or bring any charge against thee, or enter into a lawsuit with thee, litigate a point with thee in any court of judicature, or

claim, in right and law, a power, authority, and dominion over thee, as the pope of Rome does over the consciences of men:

*thou shalt condemn*; disprove and roll off the calumny, refute the charge and accusation, put to silence the clamours and pretences of wicked men, carry the cause against them, and shake off the yoke of bondage they would bring them under; and, instead of being condemned by them, condemn them. By “weapon” may be meant all the attempts made by force to ruin the interest and church of Christ in the world, such as the bloody persecutions of the Roman emperors, who, though they made sad havoc of the professors of Christianity, and designed hereby to have rooted it out of the world, and thought they should have accomplished it, yet could not do it; so far from it, that the Christians yet more and more increased, insomuch that it became a common saying, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; also the wars of the Papists with the Albigenes and Waldenses, and all the cruel methods they have taken by fire and faggot, and the bloody inquisition, to hinder the growth of what they call heresy; yet all have been in vain, a reformation has taken place, and many nations have embraced the truth, and shook off the yoke of Popery; together with all their efforts since to crush the Protestant interest; and though the kings of the earth will be stirred up, and gather together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, they will not succeed, but be overcome and slain, and the beast and false prophet at the head of them will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire: and by the “tongue” may be designed the edicts of the Pagan emperors, forbidding the exercise of the Christian religion, and threatening the preachers and professors of it with imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself; and the anathemas, bulls, and interdicts of the popes of Rome, as well as the reproaches, scandals, and calumnies uttered by the emissaries of that church against all that depart from it; together with the errors and heresies of false teachers of all sorts in all ages of the world, which, though levelled against the faith and doctrine of the church of Christ, have not been able to subvert it, nor ever will:

*this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord*; this, with all that is said in this chapter, is the part, portion, and privilege, that such shall enjoy who serve the Lord Christ, and not antichrist; they shall be treated rather as sons than as servants, and have an inheritance assigned them; not only protection from all enemies, and absolution from all charges, but they shall



receive the reward of the inheritance in heaven, that which is incorruptible and undefiled, and reserved there, since they serve the Lord Christ:

*and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord*; the vindication of their righteousness, of their cause, and of their character; or the reward of their righteous works in a way of grace; even all that righteousness and true holiness that is in them, and that righteousness which is imputed to them, and by which they are justified, are from the Lord; by which they are secured from all the charges of law and justice, and, from all the accusations of men and devils, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and acquit them at the bar of God before men and angels; (see ~~8:33~~ Romans 8:33,34).