

AN  
E X P O S I T I O N,

WITH  
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,  
OF THE PROPHECY OF  
O B A D I A H.

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This is the shortest of all the books of the Old Testament, the least of those tribes; and yet it is not to be passed by, or thought meanly of, for this *penny* has *Cæsar's* image and superscription upon it; it is stamped with a divine authority. There may appear much of God in a *short* sermon, in a *little* book; and much good may be done by it; *multum in parvo*—*much in a little*. Mr. Norris says, "If angels were to write books, we should have few folios;" that may be very precious, which is not voluminous. This book is entitled, *The Vision of Obadiah*. Who this Obadiah was, does not appear from any other scripture; some of the ancients imagined him to be the same with that Obadiah that was steward to Ahab's household; (1 Kings xviii. 3.) and if so, he that hid and fed the prophets, had indeed a prophet's reward, when he was himself made a *prophet*. But that is a conjecture which has no ground. This Obadiah, it is probable, was of a later date; some think cotemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos; others think he lived about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, when the children of Edom so barbarously triumphed in that destruction. However, what he *wrote* was what he *saw*; it is his *vision*; probably, there was much more, which he was divinely inspired to *speak*, but this is all he was inspired to *write*; and all he writes is concerning Edom. It is a foolish fancy of some of the Jews, that because he prophesies only concerning Edom, he was himself an Edomite by birth, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion: other prophets prophesied against Edom, and some of them seem to have borrowed from him in their predictions against Edom, as Jer. xlix. 7. &c. Ezek. xxv. 12. &c. Out of the mouth of these two or three witnesses every word will be established.

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O B A D I A H.

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This book is wholly concerning Edom; a nation nearly *allied*, and near adjoining to Israel, and yet an *enemy* to the seed of Jacob, inheriting the enmity of their father Esau to Jacob. Now here we have, after the preface, v. 1. I. Threatenings against Edom, 1. That their pride should be humbled, v. 2. . 4. 2. That their wealth should be plundered, v. 5. . 7. 3. That their wisdom should be infatuated, v. 8, 9. 4. That their spiteful conduct toward God's Israel should be avenged, v. 10. . 16. II. Gracious promises to Israel; that they shall be restored and reformed, and shall be victorious over the Edomites, and become masters of their land and the lands of their other neighbours, (v. 17. . 20.) and that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up by the bringing in of the great salvation, v. 21.

1. **T**HE vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom, We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her

in battle. 2. Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. 3. The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? 4. Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD. 5. If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes? 6. How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things

sought up! 7. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed against thee; *they that eat thy bread* have laid a wound under thee: *there is none* understanding in him. 8. Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? 9. And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

Edom is the nation against which this prophecy is levelled, and which, some think, is put for all the enemies of Israel, that shall be brought down first or last. The rabbins by Edom understand Rome, Rome Christian they understand it of, and have an implacable enmity to it as such; but if we understand it of Rome anti-christian, we shall find the passages of it applicable enough. And though Edom was mortified in the time of the Maccabees, as it had been before by Jehoshaphat, yet its destruction seems to have been typical, as their father Esau's rejection, and to have had further reference to the destruction of the enemies of the gospel-church; for so shall all God's enemies perish; and we find (Isa. xxxiv. 5.) the *sword of the Lord* coming down upon *Idumea*, to signify the general day of God's recompenses for the controversy of Zion, v. 8. Some have well observed, that it could not but be a great temptation to the people of Israel, when they saw themselves, who were the children of beloved Jacob, in trouble, and the Edomites, the seed of hated Esau, not only prospering, but triumphing over them in their troubles; and therefore God gives them a prospect of the destruction of Edom, which should be total and final, and of a happy issue of their own correction.

Now we may observe here,

I. A declaration of war against Edom; (v. 1.) *We have heard a rumour*, or rather, *an order*, from the Lord, the God of hosts; he has given the word of command, it is his counsel and decree, which can neither be reversed nor resisted, that all who do mischief to his people, shall certainly bring mischief upon themselves. We have heard a report, that God is raised up out of his holy habitation, and is preparing his throne for judgment; and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, a herald rather, some minister or messenger of Providence, to alarm the nations, or the Lord's prophets, who gave each nation its burthen. Those whom God employs, cry to each other, *Arise ye*, stir up yourselves and one another, and let us rise up against Edom in battle. The confederate forces under Nebuchadnezzar thus animate themselves and one another to make a descent upon that country; *Gather ye together, and come against her*; so it is in the parallel place, Jer. xlix. 14. Note, When God has bloody work to do among the enemies of his church, he will find out and fit up both hands and hearts to do it.

II. A prediction of the success of that war. Edom shall certainly be subdued, and spoiled, and brought down; for all her confidences shall fail her, and stand her in no stead, and in like manner shall all the enemies of God's church be disappointed in those things which they stayed themselves upon.

1. Do they depend upon their grandeur, the figure they make among the nations, their influence upon them, and interest in them? That shall dwindle; (v. 2.) "*Behold, I have made thee small among the*

*heathen*, so that none of thy neighbours will court thy friendship, or court an alliance with thee; *thou art greatly despised* among them, and looked upon with contempt, as an infatuated and unfaithful nation." And thus (v. 3.) *the pride of thine heart has deceived thee*. Note, (1.) Those that think well of themselves, are apt to fancy that others think well of them too; but when they come to make trial of them, they will find themselves mistaken, and thus their *pride deceives* them, and by it *slays* them. (2.) God can easily lay those low, that have magnified and exalted themselves; and will find out a way to do it, for he *resists the proud*; and we often see those *small and greatly despised*, who once looked very big, and were greatly caressed and admired.

2. Do they depend upon the fortifications of their country, both by nature and art, and glory in the advantages they have thereby? Those also shall deceive them. *They dwell in the clefts of the rock*, as an eagle in her nest, and their habitation was *high*, not only exalted above their neighbours, which was the matter of their pride, but fortified against their enemies, which was the matter of their security, so *high* as to be out of the reach of danger. Now observe, (1.) What Edom says in the pride of his heart; *Who shall bring me down to the ground?* He speaks with a confidence of his own strength, and a contempt of God's judgments, as if almighty power itself could not overpower him. As for all his enemies, even God himself, he *stuffs at them*, (Ps. x. 5.) sets them all at defiance. Their father Esau had sold his birthright, and yet they lifted up themselves, as if to them had still pertained the *excellency of dignity and power*. Many forfeit their privileges, and yet boast of them. Because Edom is high and lifted up, he imagines *none can bring him down*. Note, Carnal security is a sin that most easily hets men in the day of their pomp, power, and prosperity; and does, as much as any thing, both to ripen men for ruin, and aggravate it when it comes. (2.) What God says to this, v. 4. If men will dare to challenge omnipotence, their challenge shall be taken up; *Who shall bring me down?* says Edom. "*I will*," says God; "*Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle that soars high, and builds high, nay, though thou set thy nest among the stars, higher than ever any eagle flew, it is but in thine own imagination, and thence will I bring thee down.*" This we had, Jer. xlix. 15, 16. Note, Sinners will certainly be made ashamed of their pride and security; of their pride when it has a fall, and of their security when their confidences fail their expectation.

3. Do they depend upon their wealth and treasure, the abundance of which is looked upon as the sinews of war? Is their money their defence? Is that their strong city? It is so but in *their own conceit*, for it shall rather *expose* them than *protect* them; it shall be made a prey to the enemy, and they for the sake of it, v. 5, 6. Much to this purpose we had, Jer. xlix. 9, 10. Only here comes in a parenthesis, (*How art thou cut off?*) thou and all thy stores. The prophet foretells it, but laments it, that the thread of their prosperity was cut off. How art thou fallen, and how great is thy fall! *How art thou stupified!* So the Chaldee words it. How senseless art thou under these desolating judgments, as if they were but common strokes! But he shows that it should be an utter ruin, not a usual calamity; for, (1.) It is indeed a usual calamity for those that have wealth, to have it stolen, and to lose a little out of their great deal. *Thieves came to them*, (for where the carcase is, there will the birds of prey be gathered together,) *robbers come by night*, and they steal till they have enough, what they have occasion for, what they have a mind for; they steal no more than they think they can carry away.

and out of a great stock it is scarcely missed. Those that rob orchards, or vineyards, carry off what they think fit; but they *leave some grapes*, some fruit for the owner, who easily bears his loss perhaps, and soon recruits it; but, (2.) It shall not be so with Edom; his wealth shall all be taken away, and nothing shall escape the hands of the destroying army, not that which is most precious and valuable, v. 6. *How are the things of Esau*, the things he sets his heart upon, and places his happiness in, his good things, his best things, how are these things, which were so carefully treasured up and concealed, how searched out by the enemy and seized! *How are his hid things*, his hid treasures, plundered, rifled, and sought up! His hoards, that had not seen the light for many years, are now a spoil to the enemy. Note, Treasures on earth, though ever so fast locked up, and ever so artfully hidden, cannot be so safely laid up but that thieves may break through and steal; it is therefore our wisdom to *lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven*.

4. Do they depend upon their alliances with neighbouring states and potentates? Those also shall fail them; (v. 7.) "*The men of thy confederacy*, all of them, the Ammonites and Moabites, and other thy high allies that were at *peace with thee*, that entered into a league offensive and defensive with thee, that solemnly engaged not only to do thee no hurt, but to do thee all the service they could; they *did eat thy bread*, were magnificently treated and entertained by thee, lived upon thee, their soldiers had free quarter in thy country, and took pay as thine auxiliaries; they have *brought thee even to the border* of thy land; were very respectful to thine ambassadors, and brought them on their way home, even to the utmost limits of their country; they seemed forward to serve thee with their forces when thou hadst occasion for them, and came along with thee *to the border*, till thou wast just ready to engage the invading enemy; but then," (1.) "*They have deceived thee*; they flew back and retreated when thou wast in extremity, and proved as a *broken reed* to the traveller that is *wearry*, and as the brooks in summer to the traveller that is *thirsty*; they bear no weight, yield no relief." Nay, (2.) "*They have prevailed against thee*; they were too hard for thee in the treaty, imposed upon thee, and by cheating thee ruined thee; brought thee into danger, and there left thee an easy prey to thine enemy." Note, Those that make flesh their arm, arm it against them. Yet this was not the worst. (3.) "*They have laid a wound under thee*; they have laid that under thee for a stay and support, for a foundation to *rely on*, for a pillow to *repose on*, which will prove a *wound to thee*; not as thorns only, but as swords." If God *lay under us* the arms of his power and love, these will be firm and easy under us, the God of our covenant will never deceive us; but if we trust to the *men of our confederacy*, and what they will lay under us, it may prove to us a *wound and dishonour*. And observe the just censure here passed upon Edom for trusting to those who thus played tricks with him; *There is no understanding in him*, or else he would never have put it into their power to betray him by putting such a confidence in them. Note, Those show they have no understanding in them, who, when they are encouraged to trust in the Creator, put a cheat upon themselves by reposing a confidence in the creature.

5. Do they depend upon the politics of their counsellors? These shall fail them, v. 8. Edom had been famous for great statesmen, men of learning and experience, that sat at the helm of government, and were masters of all the arts of management, that in all treaties used to outwit their neighbours; but now the *counsellors* are become *fools*, and the wise God makes them so; *Shall I not*

*in that day destroy the wise men out of Edom*; As men, they shall fall by the sword in common with others, (Ps. xlix. 10.) and their wisdom shall not secure them; as *wise men*, they shall be *infatuated* in all their counsels, their best-laid designs shall be baffled, their measures broken, and those very projects by which they thought to establish themselves and the public interests, shall be the ruin of both. Thus *wisdom perishes from Teman*, as it is in the parallel place, Jer. xlix. 7. This was, (1.) The just punishment of their folly in trusting to an arm of flesh; *There is no understanding in them*, v. 7. They have not sense to trust in a living God, and the God of truth, but put confidence in men that are frail, fickle, and false; and therefore God will *destroy their understanding*. Note, God will justly deny those understanding to keep out of the way of danger, that will not use their understanding to keep out of the way of sin. He that will be foolish, let him be foolish still. (2.) It was the forerunner of their destruction. A nation is then marked for ruin, when God hides the things that belong to its peace from the eyes of those that are intrusted with its counsels. *Quos Deus vult perdere, eos dementat—God infatuates those whom he designs to destroy*, Job xii. 17.

6. Do they depend upon the strength and courage of their soldiers? They are not only able-bodied, but men of spirit and courage, they can face an enemy, and stand their ground; but now, (v. 9.) *Thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed*, their courage shall fail them, *to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter*, and none escape; the weak and feeble and unarmed must fall of course into the hand of the destroyer, when the *mighty men are dismayed*, and not only lose the day, but lose their lives, because they have *lost their spirit*. *Howl, fir-trees, if the cedars be shaken*. Note, The death or disuniting of the mighty, often proves the death and destruction of the many; and it is in vain to depend upon mighty men for our protection, if we have not an Almighty God for us, much less if we have an Almighty God against us.

10. For *thy violence against thy brother Jacob*, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. 11. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. 12. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. 13. Thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their substance in the day of their calamity. 14. Neither shouldst thou have stood in the cross-way, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. 15. For the day of the

LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head. 16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

When we have read Edom's doom, no less than utter ruin, it is natural to ask, *Why, what evil has he done?* What is the ground of God's controversy with him? Many things, no doubt, were amiss in Edom, they were a sinful people, and a people laden with iniquity; but that one single crime which is laid to their charge, as filling their measure, and bringing this ruin upon them, that for which they here stand indicted, of which they are convicted, and for which they are condemned, is, the injuries and wrongs they had done to the people of God; (v. 10.) "It is for thy violence against thy brother Jacob, that ancient and hereditary grudge which thou hast borne to the people of Israel, that is it for which all this shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever." Note, Injuries to men are affronts to God, the righteous God that loveth righteousness, and hateth wickedness; and, as the Judge of all the earth, he will do right for those that suffer wrong, and take vengeance upon those that do wrong. All violence, all unrighteousness, is sin; but it is a great aggravation of the violence, if it be done either, 1. Against any of our own people; it is violence against thy brother, thy near relation, to whom thou shouldst be a *Goel*—a redeemer, whom it is thy duty to right, if others wronged him; how wicked is it then for thee thyself to wrong him! Thou slanderest and abusest *thine own mother's son*; this makes the sin exceeding sinful, Ps. 1. 20. Or, 2. Much more if it be done against any of God's people; it is thy brother Jacob, that is in covenant with God, and dear to him. Thou hatest him whom God has loved, and because God has loved him; him whose cause God espouses, and will plead with jealousy; and in whose interests God is pleased so far to interest himself, that he takes the violence done to him as done to himself; *whoso touches Jacob, touches the apple of the eye of Jacob's God*. So that it is *crimen læsæ majestatis*—high treason; for which, as for high treason, let Edom expect an ignominious punishment; *Shame shall cover thee*, and a ruining one, *thou shalt be cut off for ever*.

In the following verses we are told more particularly,

1. What the violence was which Edom did against his brother Jacob, and what are the proofs of his charge. It does not appear that the Edomites did themselves invade Israel, but that was more for want of power than will, they had malice enough to do it, but were not a match for them; but that which is laid to their charge, is, their barbarous conduct toward Judah and Jerusalem, when they were in distress, and ready to be destroyed, probably, by the Chaldeans; or upon occasion of the other calamities of the Jews; for this seems to have been always their temper toward them. See this charged upon the Edomites, (Ps. cxxxvii. 7.) that in the day of Jerusalem, they said, *Raze it, raze it*, and Ezek. xxv. 12. They are here told particularly what they did, by being told what they should not have done; (v. 12.—14.) *Thou shouldst not have looked, thou shouldst not have entered*; but thou didst do so. Note, In reflecting upon ourselves, it is good to compare what we have done with what we should have done, our practice with the rule, that we may discover wherein we have done amiss, have done those

things which we ought not to have done; we should not have been where we were at such a time, should not have been in such and such company, should not have said what we said, nor have taken the liberty that we took. Sin thus looked upon in the glass of the commandment, will appear exceeding sinful. Let us see,

1. What was the case of Judah and Jerusalem, when the Edomites behaved themselves thus basely, and insulted over them. (1.) It was a day of distress with them; (v. 12.) it was the day of their calamity, so it is called three times, v. 13. With the Edomites it was a day of prosperity and peace, when with the Israelites it was a day of distress and calamity, for judgment commonly begins at the house of God. Children are corrected when strangers are let alone. (2.) It was the day of their destruction, (v. 12.) when both city and country were laid waste, were laid in ruins. (3.) It was a day when foreigners entered into the gates of Jerusalem, when the city, after a long siege, was broken up, and the great officers of the king of Babylon's army came, and sat in the gates, as judges of the land; when they cast lots upon the spoils of Jerusalem, as the soldiers for Christ's garments, what shares each of the conquerors shall have, what share of the lands, what share of the goods; or, cast lots, to determine themselves when and where they should attack it. (4.) It was a day when the strangers carried away captive his forces, (v. 11.) took the men of war prisoners of war, and carried them off, in poverty and shame, to their own country; or such a multitude of captives, that they were as an army. (5.) It was a day when thy brother himself, that had long been at home, at rest in his own land, became a stranger, an exile in a strange land. Now when this was the woful case of the Jews, the Edomites, their neighbours and brethren, should have pitied them and helped them, condoled with them and comforted them; and should have trembled to think that their own turn would come next: for if this were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? But,

2. See what was the conduct of the Edomites toward them when they were in this distress, for which they are here condemned. (1.) They looked with pleasure upon the affliction of God's people; they stood on the other side, (v. 11.) afar off, when they should have come in to the relief of their distressed neighbours, and looked upon them, and their day, looked on their affliction, (v. 12, 13.) with a careless, unconcerned eye, as the priest and Levite looked upon the wounded man, and passed by on the other side; these have a great deal to answer for, that are idle spectators of the troubles and afflictions of their neighbours, when they are capable of being their active helpers. But this was not all; they looked upon it with a scornful eye, with an eye of complacency and satisfaction; they looked and laughed to see Israel in distress, saying, *Aha, so would we have it*; they fed their eyes with the rueful spectacle of Jerusalem's ruins, and looked at it as those that had long looked for it, and often wished to see it. Note, We must take heed with what eye we look upon the afflictions of our brethren; if we cannot look upon them with a gracious eye of sympathy and tenderness, it is better not to look upon them at all; *Thou shouldst not have looked as thou didst upon the day of thy brother*. (2.) They triumphed and insulted over them, upbraided their brethren with their sorrows, and made themselves and their companions merry with them. They rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; they had not the good manners to conceal the pleasure they took in Judah's destruction, and to dissemble it, but openly declared it, and rudely and insolently declared it to them; they rejoiced over them, crowded, and hectorred, and trampled

upon them. Those have the spirit of Edomites, that can rejoice over any, especially over Israelites, in the day of their calamity. (3.) They *spoke proudly, magnified the mouth*, (so the word is,) against Israel; talked with a great disdain of the suffering Israelites, and with an air of haughtiness of the present safety and prosperity of Edom; as if it might be inferred from their present different state that the tables were turned, and now Esau was beloved, and the favourite of Heaven, and Jacob hated and rejected. Note, Those must expect to be some way or other effectually humbled and mortified themselves, that are puffed up and made proud by the humiliations and mortifications of others. (4.) They went further yet, for they *entered into the gate* of God's people in the day of their calamity, and *laid hands on their substance*; though they did not help to conquer them, they helped to *plunder* them, and put in for a share in the prey, v. 13. Jerusalem was thrown open, and then they *entered* it; its wealth was thrown about, and they *seized* it for themselves, excusing it with this, that they might as well take it as let it be lost; whereas it was taking what was not their own. Babylon lays Jerusalem waste, but Edom, by meddling with the spoil, becomes *particeps criminis*—*partaker of the crime*, and shall be reckoned with as an accessory *ex post facto*—*after the fact*. Note, Those do but impoverish themselves, that think to enrich themselves by the ruins of the people of God; and those deceive themselves, who think they may call all that substance their own, which they can *lay their hands on* in a day of calamity. (5.) They did yet worse things; they not only *robbed* their brethren, but *murdered* them, in the day of their calamity; *laid hands* not only on their *substance*, but on their persons, v. 14. When the victorious sword of the Chaldeans was making bloody work among the Jews, many made their escape, and were in a fair way to save themselves by flight; but the Edomites basely intercepted them, *stood in the cross-way* where several roads met, by each of which the trembling Israelites were making the best of their way from the fury of the pursuers, and there they stopped them: some they barbarously and coward-like *cut off* themselves; others they took prisoners, and delivered up to the pursuers, only to ingratiate themselves with them, because they were now the conquerors. They *should not have been thus cruel* to them that lay at their mercy, and never had done, nor were ever likely to do, them any hurt; they *should not have betrayed* those whom they had such a fair opportunity to *protect*; but such are the *tender mercies of the wicked*. One cannot read this without a high degree of *compassion* toward those who were thus basely abused, who, when they fled from the sword of an open enemy, and thought they were got out of the reach of it, fell *upon*, and fell *by*, the sword of a treacherous neighbour, whom they were not apprehensive of any danger from. Nor can one read this, without a high degree of *indignation* toward those who were so perfectly lost to all humanity, as to exercise such cruelty upon such proper objects of compassion. (6.) In all this they joined with the open enemies and persecutors of Israel; *Even thou wast as one of them*, an accessory equally guilty with the principals. He that joins in with evil-doers, and is aiding and abetting in their evil deeds, shall be *reckoned*, and shall be *reckoned with*, as one of them.

II. What the *shame* is, that shall cover them for this violence of theirs. 1. They shall soon find that the cup is *going round*, even the cup of trembling; and when they come to be in the same calamitous condition that the Israel of God is now in, they will be ashamed to remember how they triumphed over them; (v. 15.) *The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen*, when God will *recompense* tribulation

to the troublers of his church. Though judgment begins at the house of God, it shall not end there. This should effectually restrain us from triumphing over others in their misery, that we know not how soon it may be our own case. 2. Their enmity to the people of God, and the injuries they have done them, shall be recompensed into their own bosoms; *As thou hast done it shall be done unto thee*. The righteous God will render both to nations and to particular persons *according to their works*; and the punishment is often made exactly to answer to the sin—and those that have abused others, come to be themselves abused in like manner. The just and jealous God will find out a time and way to avenge the wrongs done to his people, on those that have been injurious to them. *As ye have drunk upon my holy mountain*; (v. 16.) that is, God's professing people, who inhabit the *holy mountain*, have drunk deep of the cup of affliction, (and they being of the *holy mountain* would not excuse them,) *so shall all the heathen drink*, in their turn, of the same bitter cup; for if God *bring evil on the city that is called by his name*, shall they be *unpunished*, that never knew his name? See Jer. xxv. 29. And it is part of the burthen of Edom; (Jer. xlix. 12.) *They whose judgment was not to drink of the cup*, who had reason to promise themselves an exemption from it, have assuredly drunken; and *shall Edom go unpunished*, that is the generation of God's wrath? No, *thou shalt surely drink of it*; the *cup of trembling shall be taken out of the hand* of God's people, and put into the hand of them that afflict them, Isa. li. 22, 23. Nay, they may expect their case to be worse in the day of their distress than that of Israel was in *their day*; for, (1.) The afflictions of God's people were but for a moment, and soon had an end, but their enemies shall *drink continually the wine of God's wrath*, Rev. xiv. 10. (2.) The dregs of the cup are reserved for the *wicked of the earth*: (Ps. lxxxv. 8.) they shall *drink and swallow down, or suck up*, (as the margin reads it,) shall drink it to the bottom. (3.) The people of God, though they may be made to drink of the *wine of astonishment* for awhile, (Ps. lx. 3.) shall yet recover it, and come to themselves again; but the heathen shall drink, and be *as though they had not been*, there shall be neither any remains nor any remembrance of them, but they shall be wholly extirpated and rooted out. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord*; so they shall perish, if they turn not.

17. But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. 18. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau: for the LORD hath spoken it. 19. And *they of the south* shall possess the mount of Esau; and *they of the plain* the Philistines; and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. 20. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. 21. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to

judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

After the destruction of the church's enemies is threatened, which will be completely accomplished in the great day of recompense, and that judgment for which Christ came once, and will come again, into this world, here follow precious promises of the salvation of the church, with which this prophecy concludes, as those of Joel and Amos did, which, nowever they might be in part fulfilled in the return of the Jews out of Babylon, notwithstanding the triumphs of Edom in their captivity, as if it were *perpetual*, are yet, doubtless, to have their full accomplishment in that *great salvation* wrought out by Jesus Christ, to which all the prophets *bare witness*. It is promised here,

1. That there shall be *salvation* upon mount Zion, that holy hill where God sets his anointed King; (Ps. ii. 6.) *Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, v. 17.* There shall be *those that escape*; so the margin. A remnant of Israel, *upon the holy mountain*, shall be saved, v. 16. Christ said, *Salvation is of the Jews*, John iv. 22. God wrought deliverances for the Jews, typical of our redemption by Christ. But mount Zion is the gospel-church, from thence the New Testament law *went forth*, Isa. ii. 3. Their salvation shall be preached and prayed for; to the *gospel-church* those are *added*, who shall be saved; and for those who come in faith and hope to this mount Zion, deliverance shall be wrought from wrath and the curse, from sin, and death, and hell, while those who continue afar off, shall be left to perish.

2. That, where there is *salvation*, there shall be *sanctification* in order to it. And *there shall be holiness*, to prepare and qualify the children of Zion for this deliverance; for wherever God designs *glory*, he gives *grace*. Temporal deliverances are then wrought for us in mercy, when with them *there is holiness*; when there is wrought *in us* a disposition to receive them with love and gratitude to God; when we are sanctified, they are sanctified to us. *Holiness* is itself a great *deliverance*, and an earnest of that eternal salvation which we look for. There, upon mount Zion, in the gospel-church, *shall be holiness*; for that is it which *becomes God's house for ever*, and the great design of the gospel, and its grace, is, to plant and promote holiness. There shall be the holy Spirit, the holy ordinances, the holy Jesus, and a select remnant of holy souls, in whom, and among whom, the holy God will delight to *dwell*. Note, Where there is *holiness*, there shall be *deliverance*.

3. That this salvation and sanctification shall spread, and prevail, and get ground, in the world; *The house of Jacob*, even *this mount Zion*, with the *deliverance* and the *holiness* there wrought, shall *possess their possessions*; the gospel-church shall be set up *among the heathen*, and shall replenish the earth; the apostles of Christ by their preaching shall gain possession of the hearts of men, for him whose messengers and ministers they are; and when they possess *their hearts*, they shall *possess their possessions*, for those who have given up themselves to the Lord, give up all they have to him. When Lydia's heart was opened to Christ, her house was open to his ministers. When the Gentile nations became *nations of them that were saved*, were *disciplined, walked in the light of the Lord, and brought their glory and honour into the new Jerusalem*, (Rev. xxi. 24.) then the *house of Jacob possessed their possessions*. This is in part fulfilled by the planting of the Christian religion in the world, and shall be fulfilled yet more and more by the setting up of Christ's throne there where Satan's seat is, and the erecting of the trophies of his victory upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom.

Now here is foretold, (1.) How this possession shall be *gained*, and the opposition given to it, got over; (v. 18.) *The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame*, for their God is, and will be, a *consuming Fire*; and the house of Esau shall be for *stubble*, easily *devoured* and *consumed* by this fire. This is fulfilled, [1.] In the conversion of multitudes by the grace of Christ; the gospel, preached in the house of Jacob and Joseph, and there owned and professed, shall be as a *fire* and a *flame* to melt and soften hard hearts, to burn up the dross of sin and corruption, that they may be purified and refined with the *spirit of judgment* and the *spirit of burning*. Christ, when he comes, shall be as a *refiner's fire*, Mal. iii. 1, 2. [2.] In the confusion of all the impenitent, implacable enemies of the gospel of Christ, that oppose it, and do all they can to hinder the setting up of the Kingdom of the Messiah by it. The gospel-day is a day that *burns like an oven*, in which all the *proud*, and all that *do wickedly*, shall be as *stubble*, Mal. iv. 1. Jacob and Joseph shall be as a *fire* and a *flame*; for those that meddle with them, to do them hurt, will find it is at their peril; they shall be to them as a *torch of fire in a sheaf*, Zech. xii. 6. The word of God in the mouth of his ministers is said to be *like fire*, and the *people as wood* to be *devoured* by it, Jer. v. 14. And the *man of sin* is to be *consumed* by the *breath of Christ's mouth*, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Those that are not refined as gold by the fire of the gospel, shall be consumed as dross by it; for it will be a savour either of life or of death.

When idols and idolatry were abolished, and the wealth and power of the nations were brought into the service of Christ and his gospel, and the spoils of the *strong man armed* were divided by him that was *stronger than he*, then the house of Jacob and Joseph devoured the *house of Esau*, so that there was none of them left *remaining*. This the *Lord spake* by his prophets, and this he did by his apostles. (2.) How far this possession shall extend, v. 19, 20. This is described in Jewish language, which speaks the accession made to the land of Israel, after the return out of captivity in Babylon. *The captivity of this host of Israel*, this host of Israel that has been so long in captivity, and, now they are come back, are still called the *children of the captivity*, these shall not only recover their own land, but shall *gain ground* upon their neighbours adjoining to them, some of whom shall become *proselytes*, and shall *incorporate* with the Jews, who, by possessing *them* in a holy communion, possess their land. We must reckon ourselves truly *enriched* by the conversion of our neighbours to the fear of God, and the faith of Christ, and their coming to join with us in the worship of God. Such an accession to our Christian communion we must reckon to be more our wealth and strength than an accession to our estates. Or, The ancient inhabitants of those lands that were carried away into captivity being lost, and never returning to their estates, the children of Israel shall take possession of that which lies next them; for their numbers shall so increase, that their own land shall be too strait for them, and their neighbours' estates shall *escheat* to them *ob defectum sanguinis—through default of heirs*. They shall enter upon that which is *adjoining* to them. The country of Esau shall be possessed by them of the *south* parts of Canaan, for to them it lies contiguous. They of the *plain*, on the *west* of Canaan, which was a champaign country, shall enter upon the *land of the Philistines*, their neighbours. They of Judah, which was the chief of the two returning tribes, shall possess the *field of Ephraim and Samaria*, which before belonged to the *ten tribes*; and Benjamin, the other tribe, shall possess Gilcad on the other side

Jordan, which had belonged to the two tribes and a half. The kingdom of Israel shall join with that of Judah, both in civil and sacred interests, and, as friends and brethren, shall mutually possess and enjoy one another; and both together shall *possess the Canaanites*, even to Zarephath, which *belongeth to Zidon*; and Jerusalem shall possess the *cities of the south*, even to Sepharad. Thus did the Jews enlarge their borders on all sides. The modern rabbins teach their scholars by Zarephath and Sepharad to understand France and Spain, grounding upon this a foolish, groundless expectation, that, some time or other, the Jews shall be master of those countries; and they call and count the Christians *Edomites*, over whom they are to have dominion. But the promise here, no doubt, has a spiritual signification, and had its accomplishment in the setting up of the Christian church, the gospel Israel, in the world, and shall have its accomplishment more and more in the enlargement of it, and the additions made to it, till the mystical body is completed. When ministers and Christians prevail with their neighbours to come to Christ, to yield themselves to the Lord, they *possess them*. The converts that Abraham made, are said to be the *souls that he had gotten*, Gen. xii. 5. The possession is gained, not *vi et armis*—by force and arms; for the *weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual*; it is by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of divine grace given along with it, that this possession is got and kept.

4. That the kingdom of the Redeemer shall be erected and maintained, to the *comfort* of his loyal subjects, and the *terror* and *shame* of all his enemies; (v. 21.) *The kingdom shall be the Lord's*, the Lord Christ's. God shall give it him, by putting all things into his hand, all power both in heaven

and in earth; *men* shall give it him, by resigning themselves to him as his willing people, and appointing him their *Head*. Now the work of kings is to protect their subjects and suppress their enemies; and this Christ will do; he will both reward and punish. (1.) The mountain of Zion shall be *saved*; on it *saviours* shall *come*; the preachers of the gospel, who are called *saviours*, because their business is to save themselves and those that hear them; and in this they are *workers together with Christ*, but to little purpose, if he by his grace did not *work together with them*. (2.) The mountain of Esau shall be *judged*; and the same that come as *saviours* on mount Zion, shall *judge the mountain of Esau*; for the word of the gospel in their mouth, that *saves* believers, *judges* unbelievers, convinces and condemns them. Christ's ministers are *saviours on mount Zion*, when they preach that *he that believeth shall be saved*; but they judge the mount of Esau, when they preach, that *he that believeth not shall be damned*, which they are not only commissioned, but commanded to do, Mark xvi. 16. And in the *course* of God's providence his scripture is fulfilled; when God raises up friends to the *church* in her distress, (as he *raised up judges* to deliver Israel of old, Judg. ii. 16.) then *saviours come on mount Zion*, to save it from being sunk and ruined; and when the enemies of the *church* are brought down, and their power broken, then is the *mount of Esau judged*; and this shall be done in every age in such a way as God thinks best; we may depend upon it, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the *church*, but the *church* shall prevail against them; *for the kingdom shall be the Lord's*, the kingdom of the world shall become his, and he has taken and will take to himself his great power and reign.