

CHAPTER 7

In this chapter,

I. The prophet, in the name of the church, sadly laments the woeful decay of religion in the age wherein he lived, and the deluge of impiety and immorality which overwhelmed the nation, which levelled the differences, and bore down the fences, of all that is just and sacred (v. 1-6).

II. The prophet, for the sake of the church, prescribes comforts, which may be of use at such a time, and gives counsel what to do.

- 1.** They must have an eye to God (v. 7).
- 2.** They must courageously bear up against the insolences of the enemy (v. 8-10).
- 3.** They must patiently lie down under the rebukes of their God (v. 9).
- 4.** They must expect no other than that the trouble would continue long, and must endeavour to make the best of it (v. 11-13).
- 5.** They must encourage themselves with God's promises, in answer to the prophet's prayers (v. 14, 15).
- 6.** They must foresee the fall of their enemies, that now triumphed over them (v. 16, 17).
- 7.** They must themselves triumph in the mercy and grace of God, and his faithfulness to his covenant (v. 18-20), and with that comfortable word the prophecy concludes.

◀300▶ MICAH 7:1-6

THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE

This is such a description of bad times as, some think, could scarcely agree to the times of Hezekiah, when this prophet prophesied; and therefore they rather take it as a prediction of what should be in the reign of Manasseh. But we may rather suppose it to be in the reign of Ahaz (and in that reign he prophesied, ▶300◀ Micah 1:1) or in the beginning of Hezekiah's time, before the reformation he was instrumental in; nay, in the best of his days,

and when he had done his best to purge out corruptions, still there was much amiss. The prophet cries out, *Woe is me!* He bemoans himself that his lot was cast in such a degenerate age, and thinks it his great unhappiness that he lived among a people that were ripening apace for a ruin which many a good man would unavoidably be involved in. Thus David cries out, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech!* He laments,

1. That there were so few good people to be found, even among those that were God's people; and this was their reproach: *The good man has perished out of the earth, or out of the land*, the land of Canaan; it was a *good land, and a land of uprightness* (²³⁰Isaiah 26:10), but there were few good men in it, none upright among them, v. 2. The *good man* is a *godly man* and a *merciful man*; the word signifies both. Those are completely good men that are devout towards God and compassionate and beneficent towards men, that love mercy and walk with God. "These have perished; those few honest men that some time ago enriched and adorned our country are now dead and gone, and there are none risen up *in their stead* that tread in their steps; honesty is banished, and there is no such thing as a good man to be met with. Those that were of religious education have degenerated, and become as bad as the worst; *the godly man ceases,*" ²³¹Psalm 12:1. This is illustrated by a comparison (v. 1): they were *as when they have gathered the summer fruits*; it was as hard a thing to find a good man as to find any of the summer-fruits (which were the choicest and best, and therefore must carefully be gathered in) when the harvest is over. The prophet is ready to say, as Elijah in his time (⁴¹⁹⁰1 Kings 19:10), *I, even I only, am left*. Good men, who used to hang in clusters, are now as the *grape-gleanings of the vintage*, here and there a berry, ²³⁷⁶Isaiah 17:6. You can find no societies of them as bunches of grapes, but those that are are single persons: *There is no cluster to eat*; and the best and fullest grapes are those that grow in large clusters. Some think that this intimates not only that good people were few, but that those few who remained, who went for good people, were good for little, like the small withered grapes, the refuse that were left behind, not only by the gatherer, but by the gleaner. When the prophet observed this universal degeneracy it made him *desire the first-ripe fruit*; he wished to see such worthy good men as were in the former ages, were the ornaments of the primitive times, and as far excelled the best of all the present age as the first and full-ripe fruits do those of the latter growth, that never come to maturity. When we read and hear of the wisdom and zeal, the strictness and conscientiousness, the

devotion and charity, of the professors of religion in former ages, and see the reverse of this in those of the present age, we cannot but sit down, and wish, with a sigh, *O for primitive Christianity again!* Where are the plainness and integrity of those that went before us? Where are the Israelites indeed, without guile? Our souls desire them, but in vain. The golden age is gone, and past recall; we must make the best of what is, for we are not likely to see such times as have been.

2. That there were so many wicked mischievous people among them, not only none that did any good, but multitudes that did all the hurt they could: *“They all lie in wait for blood, and hunt every man his brother.* To get wealth to themselves, they care not what wrong, what hurt, they do to their neighbours and nearest relations. They act as if mankind were in a state of war, and force were the only right. They are as beasts of prey to their neighbours, for *they all lie in wait for blood* as lions for their prey; they thirst after it, make nothing of taking away any man's life or livelihood to serve a turn for themselves, and lie in wait for an opportunity to do it. Their neighbours are as beasts of prey to them, for they *hunt every man his brother with a net*; they persecute them as noxious creatures, fit to be taken and destroyed, though they are innocent excellent ones.” We say of him that is outlawed, *Caput gerit lupinum — He is to be hunted as a wolf.* “Or they hunt them as men do the game, to feast upon it; they have a thousand cursed arts of ensnaring men to their ruin, so that they may but get by it. Thus *they do mischief with both hands earnestly*; their hearts desire it, their heads contrive it, and then *both hands* are ready to put it in execution.” Note, The more eager and intent men are upon any sinful pursuit, and the more pains they take in it, the more provoking it is.

3. That the magistrates, who by their office ought to have been the patrons and protectors of right, were the practicers and promoters of wrong: *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly*, to excite and animate themselves in it, *the prince asketh, and the judge asketh, for a reward*, for a bribe, with which they well be hired to exert all their power for the supporting and carrying on of any wicked design *with both hands.* *They do evil with both hands well* (so some read it); they do evil with a great deal of art and dexterity; they praise themselves for doing it so well. Others read it thus: *To do evil they have both hands* (they catch at an opportunity of doing mischief), *but to do good the prince and the judge ask for a reward*; if they do any good offices they are mercenary in them, and must be paid for them. The great man, who has wealth and power to do good, is

not ashamed to utter his mischievous desire in conjunction with the prince and the judge, who are ready to support him and stand by him in it. *So they wrap it up*; they perplex the matter, involve it, and make it intricate (so some understand it), that they may lose equity in a mist, and so make the cause turn which way they please. It is ill with a people when their princes, and judges, and great men are in a confederacy to pervert justice. And it is a sad character that is given of them (v. 4), that *the best of them is as a brier, and the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge*; it is a dangerous thing to have any thing to do with them; *he that touches them must be fenced with iron* (¹⁸⁶⁶2 Samuel 23:6,7), he shall be sure to be scratched, to have his clothes torn, and his eyes almost pulled out. And, if this be the character of the best and most upright, what are the worst? And, when things have come to this pass, *the day of thy watchmen comes*, that is, as it follows, *the day of thy visitation*, when God will reckon with thee for all this wickedness, which is called *the day of the watchmen*, because their prophets, whom God set as watchmen over them, had often warned them of that day. When all flesh have corrupted their way, even the best and the most upright, what can be expected but a day of visitation, a deluge of judgments, as that which drowned the old world when *the earth was filled with violence*? 4. That there was no faith in man; people had grown so universally treacherous that one knew not whom to repose any confidence in, v. 5. “Those that have any sense of honour, or spark of virtue, remaining in them, have a firm regard to the laws of friendship; they would not discover what passed in private conversation, nor divulge secrets, to the prejudice of a friend. But those things are now made a jest of; you will not meet with a friend that you dare trust, whose word you dare take, or who will have any tenderness or concern for you; so that wise men shall give it and take it for a rule, *trust you not in a friend*, for you will find him false, you can trust him no further than you can see him; and even him that passes for an honest man you will find to be so only with good looking to. Nay, as for him that undertakes to be *your guide*, to lead you into any business which he professes to understand better than you, you cannot *put a confidence* in him, for he will be sure to mislead you if he can get any thing by it.” Some by a guide understand a husband, who is called *the guide of thy youth*; and that agrees well enough with what follows, “*Keep the doors of thy lips from her that lieth in thy bosom*, from thy own wife; take heed what thou sayest before her, lest she betray thee, as Delilah did Samson, lest she be the *bird of the air* that *carries the voice* of that which thou sayest *in thy bed-chamber*,” ²¹¹⁰Ecclesiastes 10:20. It is

an evil time indeed when the prudent are obliged even thus far to keep silence.

5. That children were abusive to their parents, and men had no comfort, no satisfaction, in their own families and their nearest relations, v. 6. The times are bad indeed when *the son dishonours his father*, gives him bad language, exposes him, threatens him, and studies to do him a mischief, when *the daughter rises up* in rebellion against her own mother, having no sense of duty, or natural affection; and no marvel that then the *daughter-in-law* quarrels with her *mother-in-law*, and is vexatious to her. Either they cannot agree about their property and interest, or their humours and passions clash, or from a spirit of bigotry and persecution, *the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child*, ~~400~~ Matthew 10:4; ~~4216~~ Luke 21:16. It is sad when a man's betrayers and worst enemies are the men of his own house, his own children and servants, that should be his guard and his best friends. Note, The contempt and violation of the laws of domestic duties are a sad symptom of a universal corruption of manners. Those are never likely to come to good that are undutiful to their parents, and study to be provoking to them and cross them.

~~300~~ MICAH 7:7-13

SEEKING COMFORT IN GOD

The prophet, having sadly complained of the wickedness of the times he lived in, here fastens upon some considerations for the comfort of himself and his friends, in reference thereunto. The case is bad, but it is not desperate. *Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.*

I. “Though God be now displeased he shall be reconciled to us, and then all will be well, v. 7, 9. We are now under *the indignation of the Lord*; God is angry with us, and justly, because *we have sinned against him.*” Note, It is our sin against God that provokes his indignation against us; and we must see it, and own it, whenever we are under divine rebukes, that we may justify God, and may study to answer his end in afflicting us, by repenting of sin and breaking off from it. Now, at such a time,

1. We must have recourse to God under our troubles (v. 7): *Therefore I will look unto the Lord.* When a child of God has ever so much occasion

to cry, *Woe is me* (as the prophet here, v. 1), yet it may be a comfort to him that he has a God to look to, a God to come to, to fly to, in whom he may rejoice and have satisfaction. All may look bright above him when all looks black and dark about him. The prophet had been complaining that there was no comfort to be had, no confidence to be put, in friends and relations on earth, and this drives him to his God: *Therefore I will look unto the Lord*. The less reason we have to delight in any creature the more reason we have to delight in God. If princes are not to be trusted, we may say, *Happy is the man that has the God of Jacob for his help, and happy am I*, even in the midst of my present woes, if he be my help. If men be false, this is our comfort, that God is faithful; if relations be unkind, he is and will be gracious. Let us therefore look above and beyond them, and overlook our disappointment in them, and look unto the Lord.

2. We must submit to the will of God in our troubles: *“I will bear the indignation of the Lord, will bear it patiently, without murmuring and repining, because I have sinned against him.”* Note, Those that are truly penitent for sin will see a great deal of reason to be patient under affliction. *Wherefore should a man complain for the punishment of his sin?* When we complain to God of the badness of the times we ought to complain against ourselves for the badness of our own hearts.

3. We must depend upon God to work deliverance for us, and put a good issue to our troubles in due time; we must not only look to him, but look for him: *“I will wait for the God of my salvation, and for his gracious returns to me.”* In our greatest distresses we shall see no reason to despair of salvation if by faith we eye God as the *God of our salvation*, who is able to save the weakest upon their humble petition, and willing to save the worst upon their true repentance. And, if we depend on God as the God of our salvation, we must wait for him, and for his salvation, in his own way and his own time. Let us now see what the church is here taught to expect and promise herself from God, even when things are brought to the last extremity.

(1.) *My God will hear me;* if the Lord be our God, he will hear our prayers, and grant an answer of peace to them.

(2.) *“When I fall, and am in danger of being dashed in pieces by the fall, yet I shall arise, and recover myself again. I fall, but am not utterly cast down,”* ~~1822~~ Psalm 37:24.

(3.) “When I sit in darkness, desolate and disconsolate, melancholy and perplexed, and not knowing what to do, nor which way to look for relief, yet then *the Lord shall be a light to me*, to comfort and revive me, to instruct and teach me, to direct and guide me, as a light to my eyes, a light to my feet, a light *in a dark place*.”

(4.) *He will plead my cause, and execute judgment for me*, v. 9. If we heartily espouse the cause of God, the just but injured cause of religion and virtue, and make it our cause, we may hope he will own our cause, and plead it. The church's cause, though it seem for a time to go against her, will at length be pleaded with jealousy, and judgment not only given against, but executed upon, the enemies of it.

(5.) “*He will bring me forth to the light*, make me shine eminently out of obscurity, and become conspicuous, will make my righteousness shine evidently from under the dark cloud of calumny, ^{<1876>}Psalm 37:6; ^{<2880>}Isaiah 58:10. The morning of comfort shall shine forth out of the long and dark night of trouble.”

(6.) “*I shall behold his righteousness*; I shall see the equity of his proceedings concerning me and the performance of his promises to me.”

II. Though enemies triumph and insult, they shall be silenced and put to shame, v. 8, 10. Observe here,

1. How proudly the enemies of God's people trample upon them in their distress. They said, *Where is the Lord their God?* As if because they were afflicted God had forsaken them, and they knew not where to find him with their prayers, and he knew not how to help them with his favours. This David's enemies said to him, and it was a sword in his bones, ^{<900>}Psalm 42:10, and see ^{<1882>}Psalm 115:2. Thus, in reproaching Israel as an abandoned people, they reflected on the God of Israel as an unkind unfaithful God.

2. How comfortably the people of God by faith bear up themselves under these insults (v. 8): “*Rejoice not against me, O my enemy!* I am now down, but shall not be always so, and when my God appears for me then *she that is my enemy shall see it, and be ashamed*” (not only being disappointed in her expectations of the church's utter ruin, but having the same cup of trembling put into her hand), “then *my eyes shall behold her* in the same deplorable condition that I am now in; *now shall she be*

trodden down.” Note, The deliverance of the church will be the confusion of her enemies; and their shame shall be double, when, as they have trampled upon God's people, so they shall themselves be trampled upon.

III. Though the land continue a great while desolate, yet it shall at length be replenished again, when the time, even the set time, of its deliverance comes.

1. Its salvation shall not come *till after it has been desolate*; so the margin reads it, v. 13. God has a controversy with the land, and it must lie long under his rebukes, *because of those that dwell therein*; it is their iniquity that makes their land desolate (^{<PA73>} Psalm 107:34); it is *for the fruit of their doings*, their evil doings which they have been themselves guilty of, and the evil fruit of them, the sins of others, which they have been accessory to by their bad influence and example. For this they must expect to smart a great while; for the world shall know that God hates sin even in his own people.

2. When it does come it shall be a complete salvation; and it seems to refer to their deliverance out of Babylon by Cyrus, which Isaiah about this time prophesied of, as a type of our redemption by Christ.

(1.) *The decree shall be far removed.* God's decree concerning their captivity, and Nebuchadnezzar's decree concerning the perpetuity of it, his resolution never to release them, “these shall be set aside and revoked, and you shall hear no more of them; they shall no more lie as a yoke upon thy neck.”

(2.) Jerusalem and the cities of Judah shall be again reared: Then *thy walls shall be built*, walls for habitation, walls for defence, house-walls, town-walls, temple-walls; it is in order to these that the decree is repealed, ^{<PA73>} Isaiah 44:28. Though Zion's walls may lie long in ruins, there will come a day when they shall be repaired.

(3.) All that belong to the land of Israel, whithersoever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, far and wide over the face of the whole earth, shall come flocking to it again (v. 12): *He shall come even to thee*, having liberty to return and a heart to return, from Assyria, whither the ten tribes were carried away, though it lay remote, and *from the fortified cities*, and *from the fortress*, those strongholds in which they thought they had them fast; for when God's time comes, though Pharaoh will not *let the people*

go, God will fetch them out with a high hand. They shall come from all the remote parts, *from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain*, not turning back for fear of your discouragements, but they shall go from strength to strength till they come to Zion. Thus in the great day of redemption *God will gather his elect from the four winds*.

3174 MICAH 7:14-20

ENCOURAGING PROSPECTS

Here is,

I. The prophet's prayer to God to take care of his own people, and of their cause and interest, v. 14. When God is about to deliver his people he stirs up their friends to pray for them, and pours out *a spirit of grace and supplication*, ³¹²⁰Zechariah 12:10. And when we see God coming towards us in ways of mercy, we must go forth to meet him by prayer. It is a prophetic prayer, which amounts to a promise of the good prayed for; what God directed his prophet to ask no doubt he designed to give. Now,

1. The people of Israel are here called the *flock of God's heritage*, for they are the sheep of his hand, the sheep of his pasture, his little flock in the world; and they are his heritage, his portion in the world. *Jacob is the lot of his inheritance*.

2. This flock *dwells solitarily in the wood, or forest, in the midst of Carmel*, a high mountain. Israel was a peculiar people, *that dwelt alone, and was not reckoned among the nations*, like a flock of sheep in a wood. They were now a desolate people (v. 13), were in the land of their captivity as sheep in a forest, in danger of being lost and made a prey of to the beasts of the forest. They are *scattered upon the mountains as sheep having no shepherd*.

3. He prays that God would *feed them there with his rod*, that is, that he would take care of them in their captivity, would protect them, and provide for them, and do the part of a good shepherd to them: "Let *thy rod and staff comfort* them, even in that darksome valley; and even there let them want nothing that is good for them. Let them be governed by thy rod, not the rod of their enemies, for they are thy people."

4. He prays that God would in due time bring them back to feed in the plains of Bashan and Gilead, and no longer to be fed in the woods and mountains. *Let them feed* in their own country again, *as in the days of old*. Some apply this spiritually, and make it either the prophet's prayer to Christ or his Father's charge to him, to take care of his church, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to go in and out before them while they are here in this world as in a wood, that they may find pasture as in Carmel, as in Bashan and Gilead.

II. God's promise, in answer to this prayer; and we may well take God's promises as real answers to the prayers of faith, and embrace them accordingly, for with him saying and doing are not two things. The prophet prayed that God would feed them, and do kind things for them; but God answers that he *will show them marvellous things* (v. 15), will do for them more than they are able to ask or think, will out-do their hopes and expectations; he will *show them his marvellous lovingkindness*, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 17:7.

1. He will do that for them which shall be the repetition of the wonders and miracles of former ages — *according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt*. Their deliverance out of Babylon shall be a work of wonder and grace not inferior to their deliverance out of Egypt, nay, it shall eclipse the lustre of that (~~Jeremiah~~ Jeremiah 16:14, 15), much more shall the work of redemption by Christ. Note, God's former favours to his church are patterns of future favours, and shall again be copied out as there is occasion.

2. He will do that for them which shall be matter of wonder and amazement to the present age, v. 16, 17. The *nations about* shall take notice of it, and it shall be said *among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them*, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 126:2. The impression which the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylon shall make upon the neighbouring nations shall be very much for the honour both of God and his church.

(1.) Those that had insulted over the people of God in their distress, and gloried that when they had them down they would keep them down, *shall be confounded*, when they see them thus surprisingly rising up; they shall be *confounded at all the might* with which the captives shall now exert themselves, whom they thought for ever disabled. They shall now *lay their hands upon their mouths*, as being ashamed of what they have said, and

not able to say more, by way of triumph over Israel. Nay, *their ears shall be deaf* too, so much shall they be ashamed at the wonderful deliverance; they shall stop their ears, as being not willing to hear any more of God's wonders wrought for that people, whom they had so despised and insulted over.

(2.) Those that had impudently confronted God himself shall now be struck with a fear of him, and thereby brought, in profession at least, to submit to him (v. 17): *They shall lick the dust like a serpent*, they shall be so mortified, as if they were sentenced to the same curse the serpent was laid under (^{<1034>}Genesis 3:14), *Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat*. They shall be brought to the lowest abasements imaginable, and shall be so dispirited that they shall tamely submit to them. *His enemies shall lick the dust*, ^{<1070>}Psalms 72:9. Nay, they shall *lick the dust* of the church's feet, ^{<1023>}Isaiah 49:23. Proud oppressors shall now be made sensible how mean, how little, they are, before the great God, and they shall with trembling and the lowest submission *move out of the holes* into which they had crept (^{<1021>}Isaiah 2:21), *like worms of the earth* as they are, being ashamed and afraid to *show their heads*; so low shall they be brought, and such objects shall they be, when they are abased. When God did wonders for his church *many of the people of the land became Jews*, because *the fear of the Jews, and of their God, fell upon them*, ^{<1087>}Esther 8:17. So it is promised here: *They shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee, O Israel!* Forced submissions are often but feigned submissions; yet they redound to the glory of God and the church, though not to the benefit of the dissemblers themselves.

III. The prophet's thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy, in the name of the church, with a believing dependence upon his promise, v. 18-20. We are here taught,

1. To give to God the glory of his pardoning mercy, v. 18. God having promised to bring back the captivity of his people, the prophet, on that occasion, admires pardoning mercy, as that which was at the bottom of it. As it was their sin that brought them into bondage, so it was God's pardoning their sin that brought them out of it, ^{<1051>}Psalms 85:1, 2, and ^{<1034>}Isaiah 33:24; 38:17; 60:1,2. The pardon of sin is the foundation of all other covenant-mercies, ^{<1002>}Hebrews 8:12. This the prophet stands amazed at, while the surrounding nations stood amazed only at those deliverances which were but the fruits of this. Note,

(1.) God's people, who are the *remnant of his heritage*, stand charged with many transgressions; being but a remnant, a very few, one would hope they should all be very good, but they are not so; God's children have their spots, and often offend their Father.

(2.) The gracious God is ready to pass by and pardon the iniquity and transgression of his people, upon their repentance and return to him. God's people are a pardoned people, and to this they owe their all. When God pardons sin, he passes it by, does not punish it as justly he might, nor deal with the sinner according to the desert of it.

(3.) Though God may for a time lay his own people under the tokens of his displeasure, yet he will not *retain his anger for ever*, but *though he cause grief he will have compassion*; he is not implacable; yet against those that are not of the remnant of his heritage, that are unpardoned, he will keep his anger for ever.

(4.) The reasons why God pardons sin, and keeps not his anger for ever, are all taken from within himself; it is *because he delights in mercy*, and the salvation of sinners is what he has pleasure in, not their death and damnation.

(5.) The glory of God in forgiving sin is, as in other things, matchless, and without compare. There is *no God like unto him* for this; no magistrate, no common person, forgives as God does. In this his thoughts and ways are infinitely above ours; in this he is *God, and not man*.

(6.) All those that have experienced pardoning mercy cannot but admire that mercy; it is what we have reason to stand amazed at, if we know what it is. Has God forgiven us our transgressions? We may well say, *Who is a God like unto thee?* Our holy wonder at pardoning mercy will be a good evidence of our interest in it.

2. To take to ourselves the comfort of that mercy and all the grace and truth that go along with it. God's people here, as they look back with thankfulness upon God's pardoning their sins, so they look forward with assurance upon what he would yet further do for them. His mercy *endures for ever*, and therefore as he has *shown mercy* so he will, v. 19, 20.

(1.) He will renew his favours to us: *He will turn again; he will have compassion*; that is, he will again have compassion upon us as formerly he had; his compassions shall be *new every morning*; he seemed to be

departing from us in anger, but he will turn again and pity us. He will turn us to himself, and then will *turn to us, and have mercy upon us*.

(2.) He will renew us, to prepare and qualify us for his favour: *He will subdue our iniquities*; when he takes away the guilt of sin, that it may not damn us, he will break the power of sin, that it may not have dominion over us, that we may not fear sin, nor be led captive by it. Sin is an enemy that fights against us, a tyrant that oppresses us; nothing less than almighty grace can subdue it, so great is its power in fallen man and so long has it kept possession. But, if God forgive the sin that has been committed by us, he will subdue the sin that dwells in us, and in that there is none like him in forgiving; and all those whose sins are pardoned earnestly desire and hope; to have their corruptions mortified and their iniquities subdued, and please themselves with the hopes of it. If we be left to ourselves, our iniquities will be too hard for us; but God's grace, we trust, shall be sufficient for us to subdue them, so that they shall not rule us, and then they shall not ruin us.

(3.) He will confirm this good work, and effectually provide that his act of grace shall never be repealed: *Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea*, as when he brought them out of Egypt (to which he has an eye in the promises here, v. 15) he subdued Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and cast them into the depth of the sea. It intimates that when God forgives sin he *remembers it no more*, and takes care that it shall never be remembered more against the sinner. ³⁸²Ezekiel 18:22, *His transgressions shall not be mentioned unto him; they are blotted out as a cloud which never appears more*. He casts them into the sea, not near the shore-side, where they may appear again next low water, but into *the depth of the sea*, never to rise again. *All their sins* shall be cast there without exception, for when God forgives sin he forgives all.

(4.) He will perfect that which concerns us, and with this good work will do all that for us which our case requires and which he has promised (v. 20): *Then wilt thou perform thy truth to Jacob and thy mercy to Abraham*. It is in pursuance of the covenant that our sins are pardoned and our lusts mortified; from that spring all these streams flow, and with these he shall *freely give us all things*. The promise is said to be *mercy to Abraham*, because, as made to him first, it was mere mercy, preventing mercy, considering what state it found him in. But it was *truth to Jacob*, because

the faithfulness of God was engaged to make good to him and his seed, as heirs to Abraham, all that was graciously promised to Abraham. See here,

[1.] With what solemnity the covenant of grace is ratified to us; it was not only spoken, written, and sealed, but which is the highest confirmation, it was *sworn to our fathers*; nor is it a modern project, but is confirmed by antiquity too; it was sworn *from the days of old*; it is an ancient charter.

[2.] With what satisfaction it may be applied and relied upon by us; we may say with the highest assurance, *Thou wilt perform the truth and mercy*; not one iota or tittle of it shall fall to the ground. Faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it.