

CHAPTER 2

With this chapter begins a new sermon, which is continued in the two following chapters. The subject of this discourse is Judah and Jerusalem (v. 1). In this chapter the prophet speaks,

I. Of the glory of the Christians, Jerusalem, the gospel-church in the latter days, in the accession of many to it (v. 2, 3), and the great peace it should introduce into the world (v. 4), whence he infers the duty of the house of Jacob (v. 5).

II. Of the shame of the Jews, Jerusalem, as it then was, and as it would be after its rejection of the gospel and being rejected of God.

1. Their sin was their shame (v. 6-9).
2. God by his judgments would humble them and put them to shame (v. 10-17).
3. They should themselves be ashamed of their confidence in their idols and in an arm of flesh (v. 18-22). And now which of these Jerusalems will we be the inhabitants of — that which is full of the knowledge of God, which will be our everlasting honour, or that which is full of horses and chariots, and silver and gold, and such idols, which will in the end be our shame?

ISAIAH 2:1-5

INCREASE OF THE CHURCH PREDICTED

The particular title of this sermon (v. 1) is the same with the general title of the book (²⁰¹Isaiah 1:1), only that what is there called the *vision* is here called *the word which Isaiah saw* (or the matter, or thing, which he saw), the truth of which he had as full an assurance of in his own mind as if he had seen it with his bodily eyes. Or this word was brought to him in a vision; something he saw when he received this message from God. John turned to *see the voice* that spoke with him. ⁶¹²Revelation 1:12.

This sermon begins with the prophecy relating to the last days, the days of the Messiah, when his kingdom should be set up in the world, at the latter end of the Mosaic economy. In the last days of the earthly Jerusalem, just

before the destruction of it, this heavenly Jerusalem should be erected, ^{<822>}Hebrews 12:22; ^{<806>}Galatians 4:26. Note, Gospel times are the last days.
For

1. They were long in coming, were a great while waited for by the Old-Testament saints, and came at last.
2. We are not to look for any dispensation of divine grace but what we have in the gospel, ^{<818>}Galatians 1:8, 9.
3. We are to look for the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time, as the Old-Testament saints did for his first coming; *this is the last time*, ^{<818>}1 John 2:18.

Now the prophet here foretels,

I. The setting up of the Christian church, and the planting of the Christian religion, in the world. Christianity shall then be the mountain of the Lord's house; where that is professed God will grant his presence, receive his people's homage, and grant instruction and blessing, as he did of old in the temple of Mount Zion. The gospel church, incorporated by Christ's charter, shall then be the rendezvous of all the spiritual seed of Abraham. Now it is here promised,

1. That Christianity shall be openly preached and professed; it shall be *prepared* (so the margin reads it) in the top of the mountains, in the view and hearing of all. Hence Christ's disciples are compared to a city on a hill, which *cannot be hid*, ^{<4184>}Matthew 5:14. They had many eyes upon them. Christ himself *spoke openly to the world*, ^{<6181>}John 18:20. What the apostles did was not *done in a corner*, ^{<4255>}Acts 26:26. It was the lighting of a beacon, the setting up of a standard. Its being every where spoken *against* supposes that it was every where spoken *of*.
2. That it shall be firmly fixed and rooted; it shall be established on the top of the everlasting mountains, built upon a *rock*, so that the *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, unless they could pluck up mountains by the roots. He that dwells safely is said to *dwell on high*, ^{<2316>}Isaiah 33:16. *The Lord has founded the gospel Zion*.
3. That it shall not only overcome all opposition, but overtop all competition; it shall be *exalted above the hills*. This *wisdom of God in a mystery* shall outshine all the wisdom of this world, all its philosophy and

all its politics. The spiritual worship which it shall introduce shall put down the idolatries of the heathen; and all other institutions in religion shall appear mean and despicable in comparison with this. See ^{<986>}Psalm 68:16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills? This is the hill which God desires to dwell in.*

II. The bringing of the Gentiles into it.

1. The nations shall be admitted into it, even the uncircumcised, who were forbidden to come into the courts of the temple at Jerusalem. The partition wall, which kept them out, kept them off, shall be taken down.

2. *All nations shall flow into it;* having liberty of access, they shall improve their liberty, and multitudes shall embrace the Christian faith. They shall flow into it, as streams of water, which denotes the abundance of converts that the gospel should make and their speed and cheerfulness in coming into the church. They shall not be forced into it, but shall naturally flow into it. *Thy people shall be willing,* all volunteers, ^{<1318>}Psalm 110:3. To Christ shall the *gathering of the people be,* ^{<1410>}Genesis 49:10. See ^{<2104>}Isaiah 60:4, 5.

III. The mutual assistance and encouragement which this confluence of converts shall give to one another. Their pious affections and resolutions shall be so intermixed that they shall come in in one full stream. As, when the Jews from all parts of the country went up thrice a year to worship at Jerusalem, they called on their friends in the road and excited them to go along with them, so shall many of the Gentiles court their relations, friends, and neighbours, to join with them in embracing the Christian religion (v. 3): “*Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord;* though it be uphill and against the heart, yet it is *the mountain of the Lord,* who will assist the ascent of our souls towards him.” Note, Those that are entering into covenant and communion with God themselves should bring as many as they can along with them; it becomes Christians to provoke one another to good works, and to further the communion of saints by inviting one another into it: not, “Do you *go up to the mountain of the Lord,* and pray for us, and we will stay at home;” nor, “We will go, and do you do as you will;” but, “*Come, and let us go,* let us go in concert, that we may strengthen one another's hands and support one another's reputation:” not, “We will consider of it, and advise about it, and go hereafter;” but, *Come, and let us go forthwith.* See ^{<3211>}Psalm 122:1. Many

shall say this. Those that have had it said to them shall say it to others. The gospel church is here called, not only *the mountain of the Lord*, but *the house of the God of Jacob*; for in it God's covenant with Jacob and his praying seed is kept up and has its accomplishment; for to us now, as unto them, he never said, *Seek you me in vain*, ^{<2659>} Isaiah 45:19. Now see here,

1. What they promise themselves in going up to the *mountain of the Lord*; There *he will teach us of his ways*. Note, God's ways are to be learned in his church, in communion with his people, and in the use of instituted ordinances — the ways of duty which he requires us to walk in, the ways of grace in which he walks towards us. It is God that teaches his people, by his word and Spirit. It is worth while to take pains to go up to his holy mountain to be taught his ways, and those who are willing to take that pains shall never find it labour in vain. Then *shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord*.

2. What they *promise for themselves* and one another: “If he will *teach us his ways*, we will *walk in his paths*; is he will let us know our duty, we will by his grace make conscience of doing it.” Those who attend God's word with this humble resolution shall not be sent away without their lesson.

IV. The means by which this shall be brought about: *Out of Zion shall go forth the law*, the New-Testament law, the law of Christ, as of old the law of Moses from Mount Sinai, even *the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. The gospel is a law, a law of faith; it is the *word of the Lord*; it *went forth from Zion*, where the temple was built, and from Jerusalem. Christ himself began in Galilee, ^{<1023>} Matthew 4:23; ^{<2315>} Luke 23:5. But, when he commissioned his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations, he appointed them to begin in Jerusalem, ^{<2447>} Luke 24:47. See ^{<5159>} Romans 15:19. Though most of them had their homes in Galilee, yet they must stay at Jerusalem, there to *receive the promise of the Spirit*, ^{<4014>} Acts 1:4. And in the temple on Mount Zion they preached the gospel, ^{<4451>} Acts 5:20. This honour was allowed to Jerusalem, even after Christ was crucified there, for the sake of what it had been. And it was by this gospel, which took rise from Jerusalem, that the gospel church was *established on the top of the mountains*. This was the rod of divine strength, that was *sent forth out of Zion*, ^{<3112>} Psalm 110:2.

V. The erecting of the kingdom of the Redeemer in the world: *He shall judge among the nations.* He whose word goes forth out of Zion shall by that word not only subdue souls to himself, but rule in them, v. 4. He shall, in wisdom and justice, order and overrule the affairs of the world for the good of his church, and rebuke and restrain those that oppose his interest. By his Spirit working on men's consciences he shall judge, and rebuke shall try men and check them; his kingdom is spiritual, *and not of this world.*

VI. The great peace which should be the effect of the success of the gospel in the world (v. 4): *They shall beat their swords into ploughshares;* their instruments of war shall be converted into implements of husbandry; as, on the contrary, when war is proclaimed, *ploughshares are beaten into swords,* ^{}Joel 3:10. *Nations shall then not lift up sword against nation,* as they now do, *neither shall they learn war any more,* for they shall have no more occasion for it. This does not make all war absolutely unlawful among Christians, nor is it a prophecy that in the days of the Messiah there shall be no wars. The Jews urge this against the Christians as an argument that Jesus is not the Messiah, because this promise is not fulfilled. But,

1. It was in part fulfilled in the peaceableness of the time in which Christ was born, when wars had in a great measure ceased, witness *the taxing,* ^{}Luke 2:1.

2. The design and tendency of the gospel are to make peace and to slay all enmities. It has in it the most powerful obligations and inducements to peace; so that one might reasonably have expected it should have this effect, and it would have had it if it had not been for those lusts of men from which come wars and fightings.

3. Jew and Gentiles were reconciled and brought together by the gospel, and there were no more such wars between them as there had been; for they became *one sheepfold under one shepherd.* See ^{}Ephesians 2:15.

4. The gospel of Christ, as far as it prevails, disposes men to be peaceable, softens men's spirits, and sweetens them; and the love of Christ, shed abroad in the heart, constrains men to love one another.

5. The primitive Christians were famous for brotherly love; their very adversaries took notice of it.

6. We have reason to hope that this promise shall yet have a more full accomplishment in the latter times of the Christian church, when the Spirit shall be poured out more plentifully from on high. Then there shall be on earth peace. *Who shall live when God doeth this?* But do it he will in due time, for *he is not a man that he should lie.*

Lastly, Here is a practical inference drawn from all this (v. 5): *O house of Jacob! come you, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.* By the house of Jacob is meant either,

1. Israel according to the flesh. Let them be provoked by this *to a holy emulation*, ^{<5114>}Romans 11:14. “Seeing the Gentiles are thus ready and resolved for God, thus forward to go up to the house of the Lord, let us stir up ourselves to go too. Let is never be said that the sinners of the Gentiles were better friends to the holy mountain than the house of Jacob.” Thus the zeal of some should provoke many. Or,

2. Spiritual Israel, all that are brought to the God of Jacob. Shall there be such great knowledge in gospel times (v. 3) and such great peace (v. 4), and shall we share in these privileges? Come then, and let us live accordingly. What ever others do, *come, O come!* let us *walk in the light of the Lord.*

(1.) Let us walk circumspectly in the light of this knowledge. Will God teach us his ways? Will he show us his glory in the face of Christ? Let us then *walk as children of the light and of the day*, ^{<498>}Ephesians 5:8; ^{<518>}1 Thessalonians 5:8; ^{<512>}Romans 13:12

(2.) Let us walk comfortably in the light of this peace. Shall there be no more war? Let us then go on our way rejoicing, and let this joy terminate in God, and be our strength, ^{<480>}Nehemiah 8:10.. 8:10. Thus shall we walk in the beams of the Sun of righteousness.

^{<218>}ISAIAH 2:6-9

A CHARGE AGAINST THE ISRAELITES

The calling in of the Gentiles was accompanied with the rejection of the Jews; it was their fall, and the *diminishing of them, that was the riches of the Gentiles*; and the *casting off of them was the reconciling of the world* (^{<512>}Romans 11:12-15); and it should seem that these verses have reference

to that, and are designed to justify God therein, and yet it is probable that they are primarily intended for the convincing and awakening of the men of that generation in which the prophet lived, it being usual with the prophets to speak of the things that then were, both in mercy and judgment, as types of the things that should be hereafter. Here is,

I. Israel's doom. This is set forth in two words, the first and the last of this paragraph; but they are two dreadful words, and which speak,

1. Their case sad, very sad (v. 6): *Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people.* Miserable is the condition of that people whom God has forsaken, and great certainly must the provocation be if he forsake those that have been his own people. This was the deplorable case of the Jewish church after they had rejected Christ. *Migremus hinc — Let us go hence. Your house is left unto you desolate,* ^{<488>} Matthew 23:38. Whenever any sore calamity came upon the Jews thus far the Lord might be said to forsake them that he withdrew his help and succour from them, else they would not have fallen into the hands of their enemies. But God never leaves any till they first leave him.

2. Their case desperate, wholly desperate (v. 9): *Therefore forgive them not.* This prophetic prayer amounts to a threatening that they should not be forgiven, and some think it may be read: *And thou wilt not forgive them.* This refers not to particular persons (many of them repented and were pardoned), but to the body of that nation, against whom an irreversible doom was passed, that they should be wholly cut off and their church quite dismantled, never to be formed into such a body again, nor ever to have their old charter restored to them.

II. Israel's desert of this doom, and the reasons upon which it is grounded. In general, it is sin that brings destruction upon them; it is this, and nothing but this, that provokes God to forsake his people. The particular sins which the prophet specifies are such as abounded among them at that time, which he makes mention of for the conviction of those to whom he then preached, rather than that which afterwards proved the measure-filling sin, their crucifying Christ and persecuting his followers; for the sins of every age contributed towards the making up of the dreadful account at last. And there was a partial and temporary rejection of them by the captivity in Babylon hastening on, which was a type of their final destruction by the Romans, and which the sins here mentioned brought

upon them. Their sins were such as directly contradicted all God's kind and gracious designs concerning them.

1. God set them apart for himself, as a peculiar people, distinguished from, and dignified above, all other people (^{GEN}Numbers 23:9); but they were *replenished from the east*; they *naturalized* foreigners, not *proselyted*, and encouraged them to settle among them, and mingled with them, ^{HOSEA}Hosea 7:8. Their country was peopled with Syrians and Chaldeans, Moabites and Ammonites, and other eastern nations, and with them they admitted the fashions and customs of those nations, and *pleased themselves in the children of strangers*, were fond of them, preferred their country before their own, and thought the more they conformed to them the more polite and refined they were; thus did they profane their crown and their covenant. Note, Those are in danger of being estranged from God who please themselves with those who are strangers to him, for we soon learn the ways of those whose company we love.

2. God gave them his oracles, which they might ask counsel of, not only the scriptures and the seers, but the breast-plate of judgment; but they slighted these, and became soothsayers like the Philistines, introduced their arts of divination, and hearkened to those who by the stars, or the clouds, or the flight of birds, or the entrails of beasts, or other magic superstitions, pretended to discover things secret or foretel things to come. The Philistines were noted for diviners, ^{1SAM}1 Samuel 6:2. Note, Those who slight true divinity are justly given up to lying divinations; and those will certainly be forsaken of God who thus forsake him and their own mercies for lying vanities.

3. God encouraged them to put their confidence in him, and assured them that he would be their wealth and strength; but, distrusting his power and promise, they made gold their hope, and furnished themselves with horses and chariots, and relied upon them for their safety, v. 7. God had expressly forbidden even their kings to multiply horses to themselves and *greatly to multiply silver and gold*, because he would have them to depend upon himself only; but they did not think their interest in God made them a match for their neighbours unless they had as full treasures of silver and gold, and as formidable hosts of chariots and horses, as they had. It is not having silver and gold, horses and chariots, that is a provocation to God, but,

(1.) Desiring them insatiably, so that there is no end of the treasures, no end of the chariots, no bounds or limits set to the desire of them. Those shall never have enough in God (who alone is all-sufficient) that never know when they have enough of this world, which at the best is insufficient.

(2.) Depending upon them, as if we could not be safe, and easy, and happy, without them, and could not but be so with them.

4. God himself was their God, the sole object of their worship, and he himself instituted ordinances of worship for them; but they slighted both him and his institutions, v. 8. Their land was full of idols; every city had its god (^{241B}Jeremiah 11:13); and, according to the goodness of their lands, they made goodly images, ³⁰¹Hosea 10:1. Those that think one God too little will find two too many, and yet hundreds were not sufficient; for those that love idols will multiply them; so sottish were they, and so wretchedly infatuated, that they *worshipped the work of their own hands*, as if that could be a god to them which was not only a creature, but *their* creature and that which their own fancies had devised and *their own fingers had made*. It was an aggravation of their idolatry that God had enriched them with silver and gold, and yet of that silver and gold they made idols; so it was, *Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked*, see ^{308B}Hosea 2:8.

5. God had advanced them, and put honour upon them; but they basely diminished and disparaged themselves (v. 9): *The mean man boweth down to his idol*, a thing below the meanest that has any spark of reason left. Sin is a disparagement to the poorest and those of the lowest rank. It becomes the mean man to bow down to his superiors, but it ill becomes him to *bow down to the stock of a tree*, ³⁴⁹Isaiah 44:19. Nor is it only the illiterate and poor-spirited that do this, but even the *great men* forgets his grandeur and humbles himself to worship idols, deifies men no better than himself, and consecrates stones so much baser than himself. Idolaters are said to *debase themselves even to hell*, ²⁵⁹Isaiah 57:9. What a shame it is that great men think the service of the true God below them and will not stoop to it, and yet will humble themselves to bow down to an idol! Some make this a threatening that the mean men shall be brought down, and the great men humbled, by the judgements of God, when they come with commission.

ISAIAH 2:10-22

THE DOOM OF IDOLATERS

The prophet here goes on to show what a desolation would be brought upon their land when God should have forsaken them. This may refer particularly to their destruction by the Chaldeans first, and afterwards by the Romans, or it may have a general respect to the method God takes to awaken and humble proud sinners, and to put them out of conceit with that which they delighted in and depended on more than God. We are here told that sooner or later God will find out a way,

I. To startle and awaken secure sinners, who cry peace to themselves, and bid defiance to God and his judgments (v. 10): “*Enter into the rock; God will attack you with such terrible judgments, and strike you with such terrible apprehensions of them, that you shall be forced to enter into the rock, and hide yourself in the dust, for fear of the Lord. You shall lose all your courage, and tremble at the shaking of a leaf; your heart shall fail you for fear* (^{<27>}Luke 21:26), and you shall *flee when none pursues,*”

^{<18>}Proverbs 28:1. To the same purport, v. 19. *They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, the darkest the deepest places; they shall call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and rather crush them than not cover them,* ^{<30>}Hosea 10:8. It was so particularly at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (^{<23>}Luke 23:30) and of the persecuting pagan powers, ^{<16>}Revelation 6:16. And all *for fear of the Lord, and of the glory of his majesty, looking upon him then to be a consuming fire and themselves as stubble before him, when he arises to shake terribly the earth, to shake the wicked out of it* (^{<8>}Job 38:13), and to shake all those earthly props and supports with which they have buoyed themselves up, to shake them from under them. Note,

- 1.** *With God is terrible majesty, and the glory of it is such as sooner or later will oblige us all to flee before him.*
- 2.** Those that will not fear God and flee to him will be forced to fear him and flee from him to a refuge of lies.
- 3.** It is folly for those that are pursued by the wrath of God to think to escape it, and to hide or shelter themselves from it.

4. The things of the earth are things that will be shaken; they are subject to concussions, and hastening towards a dissolution.
5. The shaking of the earth is, and will be, a terrible thing to those who set their affections wholly on things of the earth.
6. It will be in vain to think of finding refuge in the caves of the earth when the earth itself is shaken; there will be no shelter then but in God and in things above.

II. To humble and abase proud sinners, that look big, and think highly of themselves, and scornfully of all about them (v. 11): *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled.* The eyes that aim high, the countenance in which the pride of the heart shows itself, shall be cast down in shame and despair. And the *haughtiness of men shall be bowed down*, their spirits shall be broken, and they shall be crest-fallen, and those things which they were proud of they shall be ashamed of. It is repeated (v. 17), *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down.* Note, Pride will, one way or other, have a fall. Men's haughtiness will be brought down, either by the grace of God convincing them of the evil of their pride, and clothing them with humility, or by the providence of God depriving them of all those things they were proud of and laying them low. Our Saviour often laid it down for a maxim that *he who exalts himself shall be abased*; he shall either abase himself in true repentance or God will abase him and pour contempt upon him. Now here we are told,

1. Why this shall be done: because the *Lord alone will be exalted.* Note, Proud men shall be vilified because the Lord alone will be magnified. It is for the honour of God's power to humble the proud; by this he proves himself to be God, and disproves Job's pretensions to rival with him, ^{<801>}Job 40:11-14. *Behold every one that is proud, and abase him; then will I also confess unto thee.* It is likewise for the honour of his justice. Proud men stand in competition with God, who is jealous for his own glory, and will not suffer men either to take to themselves or give to another that which is due to him only. They likewise stand in opposition to God; they resist him, and therefore he resists them; for he *will be exalted among the heathen* (^{<810>}Psalm 46:10), and there is a day coming in which he alone will be exalted, when he shall have put down *all opposing rule, principality, and power*, ^{<821>}1 Corinthians 15:24.

2. How this shall be done: by humbling judgments, that shall mortify men, and bring them down (v. 12): *The day of the Lord of hosts*, the day of his wrath and judgment, *shall be upon every one that is proud*. He now laughs at their insolence because he sees that his day is coming, this day, which will be upon them ere they are aware, ^{<4873>}Psalm 37:13. This day of the Lord is here said to be upon *all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up*. Jerome observes that the cedars are said to praise God (^{<4870>}Psalm 148:9) and are *trees of the Lord* (^{<4946>}Psalm 104:16), *of his planting* (^{<2819>}Isaiah 41:19), and yet here God's wrath fastens upon the cedars, which denotes (says he) that some of every rank of men, some great men, will be saved, and some perish. It is brought in as an instance of the strength of God's voice that it *breaks the cedars* (^{<4925>}Psalm 29:5), and here the day of the Lord is said to be *upon the cedars*, those of Lebanon, they were the straightest and statliest, — upon the oaks, those of Bashan, that were the strongest and sturdiest, — upon the natural elevations and fortresses, *the highest mountains and the hills that are lifted up* (v. 14), that overtop the valleys and seem to push the skies, — and upon the artificial fastnesses, *every high tower and every fenced wall*, v. 15. Understand these,

(1.) As representing the proud people themselves, that are in their own apprehensions like the cedars and the oaks, firmly rooted, and not to be stirred by any storm, and looking on all around them as shrubs; these are the high mountains and the lofty hills that seem to fill the earth, that are gazed on by all, and think themselves immovable, but lie most obnoxious to God's thunderstrokes. *Feriantique summos fulmina montes* — *The highest hills are most exposed to lightning*. And before the power of God's wrath these mountains are scattered and these hills bow and *melt like wax*, ^{<3816>}Habakkuk 3:6; ^{<4888>}Psalm 68:8. These vaunting men, who are as high towers in which the noisy bells are hung, on which the thundering murdering cannon are planted — these fenced walls, that fortify themselves with their native hardiness, and intrench themselves in their fastnesses — shall be brought down.

(2.) As particularizing the things they are proud of, in which they trust, and of which they make their boast. The day of the Lord shall be upon those very things in which they put their confidence as their strength and security; he will *take from the all their armour wherein they trusted*. Did the inhabitants of Lebanon glory in their cedars, and those of Bashan in their oaks, such as no country could equal? The day of the Lord should rend those cedars, those oaks, and the houses built of them. Did Jerusalem

glory in the mountains that were round about it, as its impregnable fortifications, or in its walls and bulwarks? These should be levelled and laid low in the day of the Lord. Besides those things that were for their strength and safety they were proud,

[1.] Of their trade abroad; but the day of the Lord shall be *upon all the ships of Tarshish*; they shall be broken as Jehoshaphat's were, shall founder at sea or be ship-wrecked in harbour. Zebulun was a haven of ships, but should now no more rejoice in his going out. When God is bringing ruin upon a people he can sink all the branches of their revenue.

[2.] Of their ornaments at home; but the day of the Lord shall be *upon all pleasant pictures*, the painting of their ships (so some understand it) or the curious pieces of painting they brought home in their ships from other countries, perhaps from Greece, which afterwards was famous for painters. Upon *every thing that is beautiful to behold*; so some read it. Perhaps they were the pictures of their relations, and for that reason pleasant, or of their gods, which to the idolaters were delectable things; or they admired them for the fineness of their colours or strokes. There is no harm in making pictures, nor in adorning our rooms with them, provided they transgress not either the second or the seventh commandment. But to place our pictures among our pleasant things, to be fond of them and proud of them, to spend that upon them which should be laid out in charity, and to set out hearts upon them, as it ill becomes those who have so many substantial things to take pleasure in, so it tends to provoke God to strip us of all such vain ornaments.

III. To make idolaters ashamed of their idols, and of all the affection they have had for them and the respect they have paid to them (v. 18): *The idols he shall utterly abolish*. When the Lord alone shall be exalted (v. 17) he will not only pour contempt upon proud men, who like Pharaoh exalt themselves against him, but much more upon all pretended deities, who are rivals with him for divine honours. They shall be abolished, utterly abolished. Their friends shall desert them; their enemies shall destroy them; so that, one way or other, an utter riddance shall be made of them. See here,

1. The vanity of false gods; they cannot secure themselves, so far are they from being able to secure their worshippers.

2. The victory of the true God over them; for *great is the truth and will prevail*. Dagon fell before the ark, and Baal before the Lord God of Elijah. The gods of the heathen shall be famished (^{<3421>}Zephaniah 2:11), and by degrees shall perish, ^{<2411>}Jeremiah 10:11. The rightful Sovereign will triumph over all pretenders. And, as God will abolish idols, so their worshippers shall abandon them, either from a gracious conviction of their vanity and falsehood (as Ephraim when he said, *What have I to do any more with idols?*) or from a late and sad experience of their inability to help them, and a woeful despair of relief by them, v. 20. When men are themselves frightened by the judgments of God into the holes of the rocks and caves of the earth, and find that they do thus in vain shift for their own safety, they shall cast their idols, which they have made their gods, and hoped to make their friends in the time of need, to the moles and to the bats, any where out of sight, that, being freed from the incumbrance of them, they may *go into the clefts of the rocks, for fear of the Lord*, v. 21. Note,

(1.) Those that will not be reasoned out of their sins sooner or later shall be frightened out of them.

(2.) God can make men sick of those idols that they have been most fond of, even the idols of silver and the idols of gold, the most precious. Covetous men make silver and gold their idols, money their god; but the time may come when they may feel it as much their burden as ever they made it their confidence, and may find themselves as much exposed by it as ever they hoped they should be guarded by it, when it tempts their enemy, sinks their ship, or retards their flight. There was a time when the mariners threw the wares, and even the *wheat into the sea* (^{<3105>}Jonah 1:5; ^{<4278>}Acts 27:38), and the *Syrians cast away their garments for haste*, ^{<1775>}2 Kings 7:15. Or men may cast it away out of indignation at themselves for leaning upon such a broken reed. See ^{<3179>}Ezekiel 7:19. The idolaters here throw away their idols because they are ashamed of them and of their own folly in trusting to them, or because they are afraid of having them found in their possession when the judgments of God are abroad; as the thief throws away his stolen goods then he is searched for or pursued.

(3.) The darkest holes, where the moles and the bats lodge, are the fittest places for idols, that have eyes and see not; and God can force men to cast their own idols there (^{<2422>}Isaiah 30:22), when they are *ashamed of the oaks which they have desired*, ^{<319>}Isaiah 1:29. *Moab shall be ashamed of*

Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, ~~2483~~ Jeremiah 48:13.

(4.) It is possible that sin may be both loathed and left and yet not truly repented of — loathed because surfeited on, left because there is no opportunity of committing it, yet not repented of out of any love to God, but only from a slavish fear of his wrath.

IV. To make those that have trusted in an arm of flesh ashamed of their confidence (v. 22): “*Cease from man.* The providences of God concerning you shall speak this aloud to you, and therefore take warning beforehand, that you may prevent the uneasiness and shame of disappointment; and consider,

1. How weak man is: *His breath is in his nostrils*, puffed out every moment, soon gone for good and all.” Man is a dying creature, and may die quickly; our nostrils, in which our breath is, are of the outward parts of the body; what is there is like one standing at the door, ready to depart; nay the doors of the nostrils are always open, the breath in them may slip away ere we are aware, in a moment. Wherein then is man to be accounted of? Alas! no reckoning is to be made of him, for he is not what he seems to be, what he pretends to be, what we fancy him to be. Man is like vanity, nay, he is vanity, he is altogether vanity, he is less, he is lighter, than vanity, when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.”

2. How wise therefore those are that cease from man;” it is our duty, it is our interest, to do so. “*Put not your trust in man*, nor make even the greatest and mightiest of men your confidence; cease to do so. Let not your eye be to the power of man, for it is finite and limited, derived and depending; it is not from him that your judgment proceeds. Let not him be your fear, let not him be your hope; but look up to the power of God, to which all the powers of men are subject and subordinate; dread his wrath, secure his favour, take him for your help, and let your *hope be in the Lord your God.*”